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MRS. CRICHTON'S CREDITOR.

CHAPTER I.

A YOUNG man of twenty-five or thirty, descending the steps of the Junior United Service Club one bright, blowy, dusty March afternoon, turned right, into Regent Street, and walked towards Piccadilly. He was slightly above middle height, and strongly built, well dressed, but not fashionable-looking. There was a roll in his walk that did not seem like the gait of a man habituated to streets, and his aspect, his tanned face, his good-humored but resolute gray eyes, showed none of the immobility of an experienced man of the world; rather they seemed pleased with everything they looked upon. This was natural enough, for Lieutenant Norman Adair, R.N., had lately inherited a handsome and unexpected fortune, and so, after a boyhood and youth of very straitened circumstances, suddenly found himself possessed of ample means, while life was still fresh.

He walked along leisurely, pausing every now and then to look up and down the street.

"Not a hansom in sight," he said, half aloud. "Town is wonderfully full. Halloo, there's an old Kilburn Red, by Jove! I'll try the knife-board once more, for old acquaintance' sake. A very familiar acquaintance it used to be."

He hailed the omnibus and clambered actively to a seat on the driver's left, lit a cigar, and was soon in high chat with the shrewd old Jehu.

It was more than four years since Adair had been in London, and there were many changes and improvements to discuss. Gradually, however, the conversation slackened, as visions of many a by-gone journey along the same route came crowding up from memory's stores.

Thank God, he thought, he had been able to send his mother and sister to spend the winter in Italy, away from the monotonous

mediocrity of a small abode in the neighborhood of Maida Vale, the goal of his present excursion, undertaken to fulfil a promise to his mother that he would call on a next-door neighbor of his, to whom they were indebted for much kindly attention.

"Do you still change horses hereabouts?" he asked, observing the driver tighten his reins and press his foot on the brake as they neared Church Street.

"Yes, sir. They do talk of changing at the Cock, but, for my part, I don't see as how the 'osses is to do it."

Here they came to a stand-still, and Adair recognized the archway into a stable yard, whence an hostler was leading a pair of rough but not ill-conditioned horses. He had stopped there often before, and knew the physiognomy of the place. An exceedingly odoriferous fish-shop was at the farther side of the arch, and on the side next him a well-stocked pawnbroker's shop, the large window crowded with parcels of knives and forks, open cases showing silver cups, spoons, ornamental implements for needlework, jewelry, birthday- and christening-gifts, clocks, umbrellas, mathematical instruments,—nothing too precious, nothing too insignificant, to escape the voracious maw of inexorable necessity.

"What tragedies the contents of that window could reveal!" thought Adair, gazing down upon it, for his feet were nearly on a level with the higher panes. As he gazed he found he could see into the interior of the shop, between a dish-cover and an Indian china vase. His attention was caught by two figures within: one, a greasy dark young man with a very large nose, was bending over the counter, inspecting the contents of a jewel-case; the other, a lady,—yes, certainly a lady,—with well-defined but delicate eyebrows, glossy fair hair, and a sweet curved mouth, which, as Adair watched intently, smiled pleasantly on the dark young man and said something, of course inaudible to her unseen witness. She wore a black lace bonnet with something blue in it, and some dark covering on her shoulders. Her eyes were hidden from him, looking down as he did, but there was something in the shape of her face and the pose of her head which seemed oddly familiar to him and strangely fascinating.

While Adair looked, the dark young man closed the jewel-case and went away. The lady sat down by the counter, put her elbow upon it, and rested her head on her hand, displaying a white throat, the graceful bend of which Adair fancied expressed despondency.

At this point in the drama the omnibus gave a sudden jerk, and he was swept away from the contemplation of the curious little scene, which roused his most profound interest.

Twenty theories sprang up in his imagination, between the pawnbroker's and Winchester Avenue, his destination, as to what could possibly bring so highbred-looking a gentlewoman into such an unsuitable locality.

"But, after all," he mused, "the chances and changes of impcouni-osity make all alike liable to seek favors from the universal relative. She may have a spendthrift husband or brother, or an 'habitual inebriate' for a father. At all events, it is an infamous shame that a

refined, delicate creature like that should be obliged to come in contact with low fellows and be forced into so trying a position. Poverty and difficulty are deucedly hard on women, well-bred women especially."

This sage reflection brought him to the corner of Winchester Avenue.

Norman Adair was on the surface a good-natured, good-humored fellow, and not inclined to waste energy or opposition on trifles; he was therefore easily detained by his mother's rather garrulous friend, and induced, by much pressing, to swallow a large cup of very sweet, hot, weak tea; but at last he escaped, leaving a most agreeable impression on the mind of the tea-maker.

He was glad to walk briskly away towards town and let his imagination dwell upon the face he had seen framed in between the dish-cover and the china vase, which had fixed itself so firmly in his mind. It was fair and fresh, and yet it was not girlish. There was a certain strength in it. He wished he could see it again; but that was not likely.

Adair was a great admirer of beauty, in a hearty, honest way; indeed, his heart was quite accustomed to be lost and found again, in many climates and latitudes; but no charmer, charm she never so potently, ever long diverted his thoughts from his profession. Even now he intended going to sea again as soon as he could get a berth.

Here he turned at the tinkle of a cab-bell, and saw an approaching hansom; but it had a passenger, and he lowered the cane he had raised to hail it.

The next moment a voice he knew called to the driver to stop, and then cried, "Halloo, Adair! Going my way? Come along."

Adair recognized a young dragoon officer whose acquaintance he had made abroad and renewed since his return to town, where they had become rather chums.

"I'm going to look at a horse somewhere near Regent's Park. Come along, if you have nothing better to do; though I don't suppose horses have been much in your line."

"No, not of late years; but as a boy I was desperately fond of riding. We lived in a hunting country, and I often got a mount, for I by no means disdained the friendship of huntsmen and grooms."

"Lucky fellow, to have the means of setting up a stable of your own."

"It will not be much good to me when I am afloat."

They bowled away, talking with animation about the various subjects dear to the hearts of young men; and time flew fast in the congenial occupation of examining the horses exhibited by the dealer they went to see.

It was late when Adair reached his hotel, and he found he had barely time to dress and drive to Harley Square, South Kensington, where he was to dine. He was a good deal struck by the number of invitations he had received since his return to London. Every one he had ever known seemed to be delighted to see him and to lavish hospitality upon him. He was quite aware that it was by no means a personal tribute, but he accepted everything as it came, without any cynical reflections, but valuing these attentions at their proper worth.

As he expected, Adair was the last to arrive, and while the host shook hands with him he uttered a short emphatic "Dinner" to the servant. "Afraid I am a little late, Mrs. Grey," said Adair apologetically to the hostess, a plump, richly dressed woman, with many jewels disposed about her person.

"Oh, you are just in time," she answered, benignly.—"Here, Marian," to a very slim, elegant girl in white, "let me introduce Mr. Adair to you. He was on board the Firefly with your brother Frank.—Will you take my daughter down to dinner?" At the same moment the solemn tones of the butler sounded above the buzz of conversation, "Dinner is on the table," and the guests began to move off. It was a large gathering, and Adair had advanced but a very few paces from the door when the elders of the party began to file past him, and he was at once addressed by his new acquaintance with some tender inquiries respecting Frank, so he did not notice any one till they were all seated at table.

Mr. Grey was commercially connected with Calcutta, where he had amassed a considerable fortune, and they were now succeeding in a fairly good class of London society with the facility which awaits those whose purses are well lined and who are liberal in distributing the lining.

"Where is your brother now?" asked Adair, as he unfolded his napkin.

"He is on board the Calliope."

"Ah! she's on the Mediterranean station. He is lucky. It's a delightful——" He paused abruptly, forgetting what he was going to say and to whom he was going to say it, in the extreme surprise which seized him as his eyes encountered those of his opposite neighbor. She sat on the host's left, a somewhat ferocious-looking dowager occupying the place of honor. She was distinguished in style; her small, well-set-on head was decorated only by its own blond shining tresses, which were sufficiently wavy and profuse to form an abundant coiffure. Extremely fair with a rich creamy fairness, her eyes were deeply gray, with long lashes and straight eyebrows, both darker than might have been expected from her hair and complexion. The curves of her mouth were sweet but firm. She wore a dress of fine black lace over silk, also black, made in demi-toilette fashion, then much rarer than at present, her snowy neck showing through the filmy covering. Her only ornament was a brilliant star of diamonds which fastened a black velvet ribbon round her throat, and two or three Marshal Niel roses with their glossy dark green leaves, fastened where the lace of her bodice crossed low on her bosom.

Adair had often seen more faultlessly beautiful women, but never one whose expression, so animated, so winning, charmed him as hers did.

While he gazed, she addressed her host with a smile which turned Adair's surprise and hesitation into astonished certainty. Yes, this charming, queenly woman was the same he had beheld that afternoon in a petty pawnbroker's shop in Edgware Road, and the pity he had lavished on her was probably thrown away. What business had a

woman of her means and position to be in such a place? It was probably some reckless, disgraceful extravagance which drove her there. But, after all, who could tell? Somehow, her face and the turn of her neck as she inclined her head to her host were quite familiar to him. Where had he seen her before?

By this time the soup was over and the salmon was going round. Adair felt that he had neglected his fair neighbor, so started afresh:

"And how does Frank—your brother—like the Mediterranean?"

"Oh, very much indeed. I want papa to take us to Malta next winter. Frank says there is a great deal going on there in the winter."

"Yes, there is,—lots. Pray, who is the lady in black opposite? I fancy I know her."

"In black lace? Oh, Mrs. Crichton. She is considered very handsome and agreeable."

"Ah, indeed. I don't think I know any one of that name. Who was she before her marriage?"

"I haven't an idea. I think mother knows."

Baffled for the moment, Adair resumed his study of the lady opposite him, while the talk grew more fluent and general.

"I must say, if D—— or L—— could look out of their graves, they'd be glad to go back to them," cried a thin, bony, well-set-up old man with a saffron complexion and large gray moustache. "The way the natives are allowed to talk, and swagger, and publish their native press, and abuse their betters, is enough to raise the shade of Clive. We are cutting a stick to beat our own backs."

"The extraordinary development of æsthetic taste," said a lady with a wild growth of dark hair, through which a gold bandeau gleamed, while a garment like a white satin night-gown hung from her shoulders, "is the great feature of the age, and is no doubt the precursor of a burst of heroic poetry."

"I assure you I have it from the best authority that the prince has taken five to three against Gloriana for the Derby."

"Hock or champagne," whispered the butler, in confidential tones.

Through the babble Adair caught the voice of his opposite neighbor, soft, rich, somewhat deep tones, though he could not exactly distinguish her words. A large *épergne* stood between him and the object of his observation, but he was fortunate in finding a loop-hole between the branches and blossoms that decorated it, through which he could see without being seen. Mrs. Crichton was evidently much interested and amused by the conversation of her left-hand neighbor, and Adair thought he had never before watched so bright and speaking a face.

Miss Grey did not find him a very satisfactory companion. He was so preoccupied that she was obliged to take refuge with the gentleman on her other side and leave Adair to his own thoughts.

Shortly before the ladies left the room there was a momentary lull, and Adair distinctly heard Mrs. Crichton say, "No, I do not agree with you. I think it is mere special pleading;" and then he recognized the voice, and knew why the face seemed familiar to him. The mist rolled away from his memory: he had a swift vision of a little ivy-covered parsonage with an old Norman village church close by; of a

meadow and bit of pasture where the parson's cow grazed peacefully; of autumn-tinted woods beyond, through which a trout-stream from the distant blue hills ran babbling and chafing against big gray stones; of his own early home, a rambling old-fashioned house at the entrance of the village; and of happy, heedless, boyish days. Ah, he knew all about his charming, puzzling neighbor now: he would introduce himself in the drawing-room. How changed his former playfellow was! She had developed into a woman of the world, mistress of herself, ready of speech, guarded, but gracious.

How interminably the men sat on! What bosh they talked about politics, and stocks, and the probabilities of war in the East! The only object of interest to the impatient sailor was a gentleman who had moved up nearer his host when the ladies left the room, and who was addressed as Mr. Crichton. He was short, or his breadth made him seem short, yet he was not fleshy; his size consisted of bone and muscle. He was very dark,—a handsome man, with regular features and nearly black eyes. Adair didn't like them; they were impatient, almost fierce, eyes, yet shifty, and never quite steady under another's gaze. His accent sounded rather Scotch to Adair, but he spoke little, and that little chiefly about India, while he smoked diligently.

At last the old Indian colonel made a move, and Adair gladly followed him up-stairs.

Miss Grey and a young sister were performing a somewhat noisy duet on a fine new Erard piano, to which Mrs. Crichton sat listening in the comfortable corner of a sofa at some distance. Adair paused a moment, and then went straight to her.

"May I venture to introduce myself to you?" he asked, with a frank smile and an admiring glance in his steady eyes.

Mrs. Crichton looked up, a little startled, and bent her head, saying, with a certain gracious gravity, "Certainly."

"Then let me remind you that in days gone by Constance Hill and Norman Adair were very good friends, in spite of many quarrels and great differences of opinion."

"Norman Adair!" she exclaimed, in great surprise, straightening from her semi-recumbent attitude. "Do you mean to say you are Norman Adair? You are greatly changed: that large moustache, and your height! You have grown so tall! Ah, yes, it is Norman." She stretched out her hand to him with a smile. "I am very, very glad to meet you." And she gathered her gown closer to make room for him beside her.

Adair, his heart beating with a degree of triumph and pleasure at which he was himself amused, gladly accepted the tacit invitation. "You puzzled me all through dinner," he said. "It was only when I heard your voice distinctly that I remembered. You are changed, too,—very much changed. You seem older, and——"

"I have always heard that sailors are the bravest of the brave," she interrupted, laughing; "but your daring is something quite extraordinary, to tell a woman to her face that she looks older."

"Yes: isn't it uncouth? But it is true; and I don't know that any one would willingly exchange your present for your past."

"Except myself, perhaps," she said, with a quick sigh. "How long is it since we met, Norman?"

"Close on twelve years. After my mother left Altringham and settled in London, I quite lost sight of you. One is afraid to inquire for any one. I did hear you had lost your father: what a capital fellow he was! But Mary, your sister, who was so delicate——?"

"She still lives and suffers," said Mrs. Crichton, looking down, while a slight quiver passed over her lips. "Where are your mother and sister?"

"I insisted on their going to St. Remo for the winter. My mother always has a terrible cough, and Effie is not strong." He went on to tell her of his good fortune, at once adopting a friendly familiarity of tone that she readily reciprocated.

She questioned him as to his career and prospects. "I am glad you are rich, Norman," she said, after a short pause. "I have lived for the last eight or nine years in an atmosphere of wealth. Not that Mr. Crichton is rich,—at least, rich enough to please himself,—but we live among rich people, and at any rate I have learned to think filthy lucre the most important, the most essential thing in the world."

"Then you *must* be changed," he cried. "You used to be the most exalted heroine possible. Don't you remember how we used to quarrel, and how heartily you despised me as a low-minded practical individual? You were quite cruel."

"My cruelty made but small impression on you," she said, laughing. "You were a most unsentimental pickle of a boy. But you must come and see me, Norman. I have three sweet babies,—at least, very sweet to me; the eldest is seven. When will you come?"

"To-morrow," Adair returned, promptly. "At what time?"

"I am always at home at tea-time,—five o'clock. Write down my address."

"Trust me, I shall not forget," said Adair, emphatically.

"Don't trust your memory. Nineteen, Sutherland Gardens,—at the other side, the unfashionable side, of the Park.—George," she said, as her husband approached, "I have found an old friend. Let me introduce Mr. Norman Adair to you: perhaps I ought to say Lieutenant Adair."

Mr. Crichton bowed and shook hands cordially; then he drew a chair near his wife and joined in the conversation. Adair watched him closely. His manner was plain and rather heavy, but in no way common or ill-bred. He was not very fluent, and Adair noticed that his wife frequently gave him a lift over small difficulties with wonderfully delicate tact.

At last Mr. Crichton looked at his watch and remarked that it wanted only a quarter to eleven; whereupon she immediately rose and wished her old acquaintance good-night, adding, "Pray come and see me."

"You must settle with Mr. Adair what day he will dine with us, and get one or two of our Indian friends to meet him. I think you have been a good deal abroad," said Crichton, hospitably, and, again

shaking hands with him, followed Mrs. Crichton to make their adieux to the hostess.

Adair left soon after. It was a fine clear night, so he lit a cigar and strolled homeward in deep thought. Yes, it was true that in the old times he was often at war with Constance Hill. She thought no end of herself; and her tongue was both sharp and quick,—far quicker than his; but she was a brick in spite of it all. And now what a charming woman she had become! That Crichton was a lucky fellow. Why, if she were free, Adair thought, he would have been inclined to have a try for her himself; but she was married, and there was an end of it. How he wished he had never pried into that infernal pawnbroker's! What extraordinary chance could have taken her there? Did Crichton know it? No, he felt pretty sure Crichton did not; though they seemed very good friends. Stay: he had always heard women would go into queer places in search of bargains. Something had caught her eye in the window; some bauble, dirt-cheap. What a blockhead he was not to have thought of this before!

This idea gave him great comfort. Adair's idea of what a good woman ought to be was very exalted, and that a creature who had so suddenly captivated his imagination should have any dealings, save picking up a bargain (and even that she had better have left alone), with such people and in such a place, was infinitely revolting to him. She was evidently the wife of a rich man: she could have no legitimate need for transactions with a pawnbroker.

CHAPTER II.

TIME seemed to drag frightfully next day.

Adair had to see his solicitor and stockbroker; for property, as well as poverty, has its cares. These engagements helped the moments to pass till five o'clock. The last strokes of the hour were sounding from a neighboring church when he rang the bell at Mr. Crichton's door.

Sutherland Gardens, in the front, were nothing more nor less than a street, but behind the house lay a large piece of ground, well planted and laid out, on which most of the best rooms opened. It was a large, comfortable abode, but not exactly a mansion. Adair was admitted by a typically neat parlor-maid, who ushered him up-stairs past a pretty conservatory to a solemn drawing-room oppressively furnished with buhl cabinets, velvet-like carpets, richly-covered chairs and sofas, heavy portières and curtains, elaborate china, bronze, and ivory ornaments, among which Indian productions prevailed. The blinds were down, and the general aspect of the apartment was funereal. With a request that he would sit down, the servant left him to his own reflections. Before he had time to do more than glance round, Mrs. Crichton entered. She was very simply dressed in a gown of dark blue cashmere and velvet, but nothing could make her figure look other than graceful and stately.

"Very glad to see you!" she exclaimed, giving him her hand.

"You ought not to have been put in this dreary room. I should commit suicide if I sat alone here. Come down to my little sanctum."

"By all means," Adair returned, and he followed her down-stairs to a pleasant parlor with a bay-window which opened on the garden. It was larger than back rooms generally are in London, and abundantly furnished,—a large useful table, dwarf bookcases, a comfortable sofa, a small cottage piano, a big work-basket well filled, some glasses, a bowl full of flowers, and plenty of sunshine,—evidently the abode of an active, industrious woman.

"There, that is a comfortable corner. Mr. Crichton likes that chair whenever he comes in here," she said. "Do you know, it is very good of you to come all the way from the gauds and gayeties of fashionable life to this bourgeois quarter?"

"Very good to myself," he returned, taking the place assigned him, and looking attentively at her, to trace what was the change which left her so unlike, while still so like, what she had formerly been. "You know I am a stranger in London: I never stayed here long: it was too expensive a pleasure to indulge in, formerly. Now I intend to enjoy it, at any rate for a while."

"And then go to sea again?"

"Yes: that is the life I like best."

Here tea was brought in, with a dainty dish of buttered toast, crisp and hot.

"I hope you don't disdain tea?" asked Mrs. Crichton.

"It is my favorite beverage."

"And tell me more about yourself," she continued, handing him a cup.

"I don't think I have anything to add to what I told you last night. I have got on fairly well, considering I had no interest. I came home every three years or so, to have a peep at my mother and sister, and then about a year ago my father's cousin, a bit of a miser, died rather suddenly, and left no will, so I came in for all he possessed, which is a good lot more than any one expected. I was away on the South American station when that happened, and I only got home in December: so it's something very new, and, I must say, delightful, to find myself permanently flush of cash."

"Well, it is quite possible that by and by you may grow accustomed to it and think you haven't enough. Oh, Norman, try never to grow greedy about money: it is a terrible hunger! but I am so glad you have it: the want of it is cruel, degrading, miserable."

"I am glad to see, Mrs. Crichton," said Adair, looking round, "that you are not afflicted in that way."

"Oh, no, of course my husband is well off; but that is not like, not quite like, having money of one's own."

"Isn't it?" said Adair, opening his honest eyes. "I fancy I should be very much riled if my wife didn't consider my belongings as hers too."

"Would you?" cried Mrs. Crichton. She laughed as if much amused, yet there was a curious ring of sadness about the sound as it ceased. "I suppose some men are like that. But if your wife

brought you in long milliners' bills, you would not like that? You would prefer her keeping within the limits of her allowance."

"I fancy the woman *I* am going to fall in love with would be too well principled to run heavy bills."

Mrs. Crichton slowly shook her head. "It is hard to tell in advance who or what will take your fancy."

"Why should I not marry a woman like you? I am sure you could be trusted with anything, and——"

"Hush!" she interrupted, with a quick flush, and then with an air of solemn mockery added, "Ah, you see, the difficulty would be to find anything like me anywhere."

"I am quite ready to believe that," Adair replied, with laughing eyes, as he doubled up a thin slice of bread-and-butter. "I remember what a first-rate girl you were at the parsonage long ago,—how you used to do everything for every one,—ay, and took command of every one into the bargain."

"Ah, Norman, that girl has disappeared: she has been swept away down the rapids of Time's stream. This is a woman who has learned the limits of her own power and capabilities. I have been at school since we met. You know I married a man older and richer than myself. He was very generous and disinterested; he took me for myself alone; and it was my duty and pleasure to mould myself on his ways and wishes."

"It would have done him a deuced deal more good if he had moulded himself on yours," said Adair, abruptly.

"What a compliment!" she cried, again laughing, this time with unmixed amusement. "Believe me, I am a much wiser woman than I was. Now for another source, an inexhaustible source, of wisdom. I hear the children; they have just come in."

Adair heard a confusion of young voices in the hall. Mrs. Crichton rose and opened the door. "Come here, darlings," she said. A boy and a girl, one seven or eight, the other a couple of years younger, followed by a toddling rogue who was barely three, answered her call immediately.

"Oh, mother dear, Georgie was such a naughty boy! there was a big, big dog came jumping and barking at the p'ram; and Georgie went to strike him with his hoop-stick. Nurse said he might—the dog might—have torn him to pieces!" cried the girl, a pretty flaxen-haired child with big, dark, wondering eyes and a sweetly curved mouth like her mother's.

"I was afraid he would hurt baby," said George, coloring.

"And you tried to beat him off? That was a brave little chap," cried Adair. "Come and sit on my knee. You ought to be a sailor."

Georgie, after a minute's hesitation, accepted the offer of a seat, and replied, with a serious air,—

"No; I would rather be a groom than a sailor."

"No, Winnie dear," said Mrs. Crichton, lifting her on her knee and taking off her hat, "Georgie must not quarrel with big barking dogs; but he was not naughty: he tried to take care of baby."

Here Nurse, a very important-looking elderly person, observed that Master George was quite too venturesome.

"Go and kiss that gentleman," said Mrs. Crichton. "He used to play with mother when she was a little girl."

Winnie got down, her mother passing her fingers lovingly through the child's long hair as she moved away to Adair to displace her brother. She looked very searchingly at him after holding up her mouth for the prescribed kiss, and then asked,—

"Are you as old as mother?"

"I am just two years older."

"That is like Winnie and me," said Georgie, who was contemplating them. "Yet Winnie never will do nothing I tell her."

"Of course not," said Adair, laughing. "I assure you I always did everything your mother told me."

Here baby, who had scrambled on his mother's knee, perceived biscuits and bread-and-butter on the table, and began to scream for them.

"He'll not eat a morsel at his tea if you give him those, 'm," said Nurse.

"Babs shall have biscuits for himself at tea," temporized the mother.

"Give him to me," asked Adair. "What a jolly little chap?"

Baby looked at him solemnly for a moment, and then slapped his face with all his might.

"Oh, you rude boy!" cried Winnie, scandalized.

"Doesn't like to be taken liberties with, eh?" said Adair, laughing, and giving him back to his nurse, towards whom he was struggling with arms and legs.

"He hasn't had time to learn manners yet, sir," remarked that functionary, and disappeared with her charge.

The two elder children remained for a short time, Winnie contenting herself on Adair's knee, examining the charms which hung to his watch-chain, and putting many questions to her new acquaintance, while George rummaged about the room, asking for this and upsetting that. At last he lifted a solid-looking book.

"Take care, Georgie," cried his mother; "that is father's book, and his mark is in it."

The boy instantly replaced it, and turned away with a celerity that struck Adair. "Father," he thought, "is a terror to evil-doers."

"Are you going to live with us?" asked Winnie.

"No such luck, Winnie. I am an unlucky beggar without a home."

Winnie cuddled close to him, pressing her curly head against his chest.

"Mother dear, let him live with us," she cried, appealingly.

"Mr. Adair's own mother will be coming to live with him soon," said Mrs. Crichton, smiling.

"Have you a mother?" asked the child, incredulously. "Old people don't often have mothers, do they?"

"Anyway, father wouldn't let him stay here. He doesn't like people," cried George.

"Oh, he likes Mr. Adair," returned his mother. "He wants him to come and dine here."

"Do, do, do come!" exclaimed Winnie, who had evidently taken a sudden fancy to Adair. "I will show you my best big dolly. It has nice fair hair like mine."

"Then it must be charming."

Here the under-nurse came in to say that tea was quite ready.

"You must go, dears," said Mrs. Crichton.

"Oh, I am so hungry!" cried George, and scampered off without saying good-by. Winnie, also in haste, clasped her arms round Adair's neck and kissed him heartily, then bestowed a rapid hug on her mother, and was gone.

"What jolly little darlings!" exclaimed Adair. "Nice children are enchanting."

"They are profoundly interesting," she returned, with a slight sigh, "but don't fancy they are an unmixed pleasure: they are so streaked with good and evil, it is a revelation to live with them. I suppose I see this so clearly because I am not naturally a maternal woman."

"Not maternal?" cried Adair, astonished. "Why, you seem wrapped up in them. And how they love and cling to you!"

"God knows I love them," she said, with a thoughtful, far-away look in her eyes, "but I haven't that feeling of personal possession in them that some women enjoy—I suppose it is enjoyment. They are quite separate entities—little individuals—to me. I fancy the older they grow the greater pleasure they will give me—if they do not give me pain."

"I should not have thought you would admit such a doubt," cried Adair.

"Ah! I doubt so much!"

He looked earnestly into her eyes, while he thought, "She is not happy: happiness does not doubt."

There was a brief pause; then Mrs. Crichton, speaking with a slight effort and in a changed tone, said, "You remember my sister? She was very pleased to hear of you. I was with her this morning." Then, with some slight hesitation, "If you have the time to spare, I should be so glad to take you round to see her. She lives quite near; and she has such a dull, sad life."

"Yes, of course. I shall be delighted. I have plenty of time."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Crichton. She did not add another word, but she let her eyes speak to his. What a world of sorrowful gratitude he read in them!

"It is fortunate that I am free this evening," she resumed. "Mr. Crichton dines out with some friends, and does not return to dress, so I shall divide my evening between my sister and the children. I shall just guide you to her house and introduce you; then, if you will stay a little while and talk over old times——"

"It will be a pleasure to me," Adair interrupted.

"I shall not keep you long," she returned, and left the room. She was soon back, and wore the same black lace bonnet, the same dark silk mantle, which he had noticed the day before. It gave him a curious thrill of pain to recognize them. She said, "I am ready," and they left the house together.

After reaching the Bayswater Road they followed it for a few paces, and then turned down a narrow lane or street of very small houses with diminutive gardens adorned by somewhat blackened old poplars. The street was neat and well kept: it was evidently a relic of the days when Bayswater was a country place entitled "Myrtle Grove."

"I must not forget to fix what day you can dine with us," said Mrs. Crichton.

"Pray consult your own engagements, Mrs. Crichton."

"Oh, we have very few. Don't imagine we lead a gay London life. Will Wednesday next suit you?"

"Yes, perfectly."

"Do you know Mayne, the explorer, who made that journey through Thibet people talked about some years ago?"

"No, I have never met him."

"He is a friend of Mr. Crichton's, and rather amusing, considering the solemnity of his book. I will try and get him to come. I don't want a big dinner: they are generally so dull. I was rather lucky last night in having Mr. Langley for a neighbor. He is a very clever barrister, and a little good talk does brighten one up wonderfully."

Here they paused at a neat little abode. Mrs. Crichton smiled and kissed her hand to some one in the window whom Adair did not see, because he was looking at his companion.

A small servant-girl opened the door and ushered them into a front parlor, where a very slight, almost attenuated woman lay on a sofa drawn up to the window. Her eager dark eyes seemed too large for the pale, thin face they illuminated; her thin gray hair was neatly braided under a pretty little lace cap, and a bright-colored eider-down coverlet lay upon her feet. She held a piece of knitting and a pair of large wooden needles. The room looked comfortable and cheerful with spring flowers; a small fire glowed in the grate, and, though the furniture was common enough, there was a touch of good taste in all the arrangements. The folding doors between the front and back rooms, always hideous, were concealed by portières of gay-flowered chintz, prettily draped.

"I have brought our old friend Norman Adair to see you, dear," said Mrs. Crichton as she entered the room.

"He is very good to let himself be brought," returned Miss Hill, holding out her hand. "It is many a long day since I saw an old friend."

"I am very glad to have an opportunity of coming," returned Adair, taking her hand warmly, and feeling himself a lumbering monster in that tiny room beside so fragile a creature as the invalid.

"We have all seen a good many changes since we last met. I am glad to find yours have been for the better."

"Thank you,—yes, considerably for the better; and Mrs. Crichton,

too. I have had the pleasure of meeting her husband and making the acquaintance of those jolly little children of hers."

"Oh," ejaculated Miss Hill, "I suppose your husband is all right, Constance? I don't exactly remember when I last saw him."

"You know, dear Mary, he is greatly occupied, and it is late when he reaches home,—much too late to see you," urged Mrs. Crichton, gently.

"Oh, yes, I quite understand," said her sister, in a peculiar tone. "The children are fine healthy little creatures; at least they are strong enough, if restlessness is any sign of strength. The little girl is rather sweet. I don't care much for the boys."

"There is a candid and impartial aunt for you," said Mrs. Crichton, smiling. "Now I shall leave Norman with you, and return when the little ones are safe in bed: we are going to have an orgy of puzzles and picture-books and stories, as I shall be alone this evening." She stooped to draw her sister's coverlet a little higher, murmuring something to her as she did so. Then she shook hands with Adair, told him not to forget his engagement for the following Wednesday, and departed.

The invalid watched her through the window as she opened the garden gate, and Adair noticed the softening of her keen eyes as she gazed; then, with a quick sigh, she turned to him and exclaimed, "She is changed too!"

"Yes: she has developed into a more charming woman than I expected; or rather I was too ignorant, too unlicked a cub to expect anything," said Adair, with a good-humored smile.

There was a brief pause; then Miss Hill began an exhaustive cross-examination of her visitor, respecting his mother, his sister, his own career and future plans. She was a shrewd, clever woman, narrowed by the physical limits of her curtailed existence, but strong and enduring. There was nearly ten years' difference between her and her younger sister, and more than twenty in appearance. Hers was a rocky nature, but, given the wand of affection and gratitude to strike it, living waters of truth and tenderness could be evoked from its stony depths.

"From the time your mother left Altringham," Miss Hill resumed, after a pause, "we lost sight of her. My father died about two years and a half after: of course we had to turn out. The nearest sphere of action, a sphere about as big as a marble, was the county town; and we spent nearly three years there. Then Constance met Mr. Crichton, and after six months they married, and we have all been in London since."

"And do you like being in London?" asked Adair.

"Like?" echoed his interlocutor. "How can I like one place more than another? My world is within four walls. Had I the power of moving about, I fancy I should prefer London to any other dwelling-place."

"At any rate," said Adair, seeking anxiously for some consolatory topic, "it must be a comfort to you that your sister is comfortably settled: I fancy Mr. Crichton is well off and—prudent."

"Prudent! Oh, he is uncommonly prudent; but I don't suppose

I should have liked my sister's husband whatever he was. Indeed, I never could understand why she fell in love with him."

"And she did fall in love with him?"

"She did. There could be no mistake about it."

"I am quite sure," cried Adair, "she would never have married a man she did not love."

"Don't be too sure, then. I've known sweet good women driven into matrimony with mere monkeys of men by the whips of poverty."

"Ah, you cannot call Mr. Crichton a monkey," returned Adair, laughing: "he is a very good-looking fellow."

"He is," said Miss Hill, with complete agreement. "So I thought too."

Adair soon after stood up to say good-by. "I think I shall be some time longer in town," he said; "and, if you will allow me, I shall come and see you sometimes."

"Allow you!" she exclaimed, with a pleasant laugh which reminded him of her sister's. "My dear boy, you know very well it is bestowing a favor to give half an hour to a miserable recluse like myself. If I had the use of my limbs and all my faculties, no one would love the world better than I. I think I am strong enough and honest enough not to cry sour grapes. Come as often as you can spare time for charity, and bring me the echoes of that wonderful, interesting, cruel world away from which fate has shunted me into a corner."

"You may depend on it, I will come, Miss Hill."

He walked briskly back to the Bayswater Road, and, turning, carefully took the bearings of Myrtle Grove before he went away to his hotel, his heart and imagination full of the pictures left on them by the last couple of hours. A sweeter picture had never been presented to either than that of Mrs. Crichton and her fair children. Why was it that a curious, doubtful hope for her happiness remained with him, rather than a conviction of its certainty? That, and impatient calculation as to how soon he might call again, chiefly occupied his thoughts for the rest of the evening, although he went to the theatre with a merry party, relations of his friend young Vesey of the —th Light Dragoons, and was one of the merriest among them.

The next morning Adair had a note from Mrs. Crichton: "Pray do not think me tiresome. Mr. Crichton, who is very business-like in his ideas, insists that if I do not repeat my invitation in writing you will forget all about it: so pray remember Wednesday the 30th. My poor sister greatly enjoyed your visit, and if you have time to repeat it, it would be a real boon. You have made a deep impression on my little Winnie, who sends you a kiss."

A new world of interest, of curiosity, of conjecture, seemed to have suddenly opened for Adair, into which he plunged eagerly, without a thought of possible harm to himself or others. He possessed, on the whole, however, a fair share of common sense and self-control; he therefore resisted his strong inclination to repeat his visits to Sutherland Gardens and Myrtle Grove, especially the latter. He could perceive that his old acquaintance Miss Hill did not love her brother-in-law, and felt sure that whatever her feelings she would not long keep

them to herself. It would not be honorable on his part to obtain a key to the puzzle which interested him through this illegitimate channel. So he got over the time as best he could. But, in spite of the many means to be found in London to speed its flight, it did not fly quite as fast as he wished; and Wednesday seemed slow in coming. It came at last, however, and the hansom which took him to Bayswater punctually at the time appointed seemed the very slowest he had ever met with.

He was shown into the solemn drawing-room, which, being adorned with flowers, looked a little more cheerful, and was welcomed by Mrs. Crichton with kindly ease. She had her two elder children with her, and wore an Indian embroidered muslin over lilac, with lace and lilac ribbons gracefully disposed about it, and three narrow bands of lilac in classic fashion round her graceful head. Winnie ran to meet and embrace him, but George offered a more sober greeting.

"Mr. Crichton is a little late," said his wife, "but he will be here directly."

"I fancy I am early," returned Adair, and he took Winnie on his knee. "Where is the beautiful dolly I was to see?" he asked.

"Pray do not ask," said Mrs. Crichton. "It has come to a sad end." Adair saw that Winnie's eyes were full of tears and her pretty little mouth quivered. "It was all an accident, and we do not want to annoy poor father by telling him about it."

"Shall I bring you another?" whispered Adair to his little friend,—"another as pretty?"

"Oh, yes, please; but"—with a deep sigh—"it won't be the old one."

"Try not to think of it, darling," said her mother.

Here Mr. Crichton entered and gave Adair a cordial welcome. His smile was frank and pleasant, but when in repose there was something grim and lowering about his brow and eyes. The children went to him frankly enough, and he seemed exceedingly fond of them, ready to tell little anecdotes of their cleverness and to betray other symptoms of paternal weakness.

The other guests now arrived quickly. There was a majority of men, there being but two ladies besides the hostess,—one a pretty, meek, silent young wife, who came with a somewhat bumptious husband, the other a very chatty, much travelled, well-preserved widow, who was gorgeously arrayed and quite appropriated Mr. Crichton.

The celebrated traveller came last; and Adair was made happy by taking Mrs. Crichton down to dinner. The repast itself was simple, but perfect, ending, Indian fashion, with a curry of the highest merit. The conversation was general and rather above the average, and Adair admired the unobtrusive tact with which Mrs. Crichton led it, while a certain good-humored *bonhomie* made her husband an excellent host. Once a sudden gleam of angry disgust flashed from his deep-set black eyes towards his wife, as he said to the traveller, who was about to help himself to an *entrée*, "Don't touch that, Mayne: it isn't fit to eat."

"After all, it is a sort of thing any man would say," thought Adair. "I am growing crotchety and fanciful."

When the ladies had left, though at first, in compliment to the traveller, the talk for some time was geographical, before long it took a stock-exchange turn, and Adair discovered that his host was greatly taken up with a scheme to build cheap marine villas at a newly instituted bathing-place on the Kentish coast. He listened with attention, an odd instinctive desire to establish friendly relations with his old friend's husband impelling him to affect a certain degree of interest.

"It's going to be a capital concern," said Mr. Crichton, pushing the very particular port towards him. "If you have a few stray hundreds, you could not do better than take shares."

"I should like to know more about it," said Adair.

"Look in at my office any day, and I'll explain the whole thing to you. Come—no, not to-morrow; that's pretty well bespoke—the day after, some time before one."

"Thank you; I will be sure to come." Adair left the room as soon as he could, accompanied by the explorer and a gray-haired epicurean bachelor who was considered quite a man of fashion in Bayswater circles.

The fair widow immediately captured Major Mayne, and Adair drew a seat beside his hostess.

"What happened to the doll?" he asked.

"Ah, that was a tragedy! Poor George has rather a violent temper, and quarrels with his sister, who often provokes him. Yesterday there seems to have been a scrimmage in the nursery, and George, by way of annoying Nurse, who was ironing poor Dolly's best frock, shook the table violently. Doll was lying on the floor where George had thrown her; the iron was near the edge; it was very hot; it fell on Dolly's lovely face, and you can imagine the rest. I don't think George intended to work such ruin, for he was quiet in a moment and cried heartily: so we say nothing about it, for Mr. Crichton is occasionally very severe."

"What a young Turk Master George must be! Now, Mrs. Crichton, I want to buy my little sweetheart a doll, and I daren't on my own judgment. Will you come and help me to choose one?"

"It is really too kind of you, Norman——"

"Kind to myself, yes."

"Suppose we take Winnie herself to choose?"

"By all means. But the boy: shall he stay behind?"

"I think he must, as he has been so naughty."

"Suppose I promise, if he keeps good a whole week, to take him?"

"Oh, it would bore you frightfully."

"No, I am never bored."

"You are a happy creature! Well, if you will be so good."

"All right. I'll come to-morrow, about three?"

"Both Winnie and her mother will be delighted."

After some further talk, during which Adair noticed that Mrs. Crichton's eyes turned somewhat uneasily from time to time towards the door, Mr. Maberly (the bachelor) approached to say that he was sure

Mrs. Fairchild, the pretty young *marîée* aforesaid, sang delightfully : would Mrs. Crichton play an accompaniment ?

"Certainly, if I can," she returned, rising readily and going to the piano. A great turning over of music ensued, and at last a ballad was found which Mrs. Fairchild acknowledged she used to sing. She accordingly lifted up her voice, and went feebly through it, in a horrid fright, making more than one mistake, which her hostess masked as well as she could by the accompaniment.

While this was going on, the rest of the men came up-stairs. When it was over, and the widow was having some curiosities of Thibetan work explained to her by Mayne, a bright idea occurred to Adair, who had joined the group at the piano. "What a lot of pretty things you have about!" he said, picking up a quaint Japanese bronze. "I believe ladies are particularly fond of collecting these oddities,—especially if they are bargains,—and don't much care where they go for them. I remember a friend of my mother's used to find treasures, dirt-cheap, at the pawnbrokers' shops." He looked at his hostess as he spoke, and was annoyed to feel his own color rise.

Mrs. Crichton raised her eyes to his, with a slight expression of surprise. "I don't think I should ever buy at a pawnbroker's," she said, quietly. "Besides, I have no taste for collecting. Mr. Crichton amuses himself in this way. All these are his purchases."

A sudden conviction seized on Adair's mind, as she spoke, that it was not to buy baubles she had sought that sordid shop in the Edgware Road.

Adair had no further opportunity of speaking with his hostess, though he outstayed his other guests. Mr. Crichton talked with him with cheerful friendliness and reminded him of his promise to call at the office.

"He doesn't seem a bad sort of fellow," thought Adair, as Crichton made some playful allusion to his wife as the commander-in-chief.

He had said good-night and left the room, when he suddenly remembered he had not asked the address of Mr. Crichton's office, and turned back to inquire it. Mrs. Crichton was standing by the fireplace, and the lights on the mantelpiece fell full upon her. She looked white and distressed, while from the other end of the room came the exclamation "Damned infernal carelessness!" in deep, thunderous tones, from her husband. The words were arrested for a moment on Adair's lips, and, when he did speak, both host and hostess received him smilingly, and, having entered the address in his pocket-book, he went off, thinking it was bad style to be so furious about a servant's mistake, for of course it must have been of the servants Crichton was speaking. Could his old friend Constance Hill, who was such a charming tyrant in the by-gone days, have grown timid as a wife? Bright and gracious as she was, she had a guarded, watchful expression in her eyes,—except when alone with him.

The remembrance of her delightful frankness in their *tête-à-tête* interview gave him a curious thrill of mingled pleasure and apprehension,—apprehension that in the well and smoothly ordered family into which he had been so cordially welcomed "all was not gold that glittered."

CHAPTER III.

THIS was the beginning of a rapidly growing intimacy. Adair soon found he was due two or three times a week in Sutherland Gardens, where he was received with open arms by the children, with quiet content which made him feel delightfully at home by their mother, and with cordiality by the master of the house.

It was like having a home, a charming, restful home, though he still sought for the inner truth of his old playfellow's life. Frank as she seemed, there were discordant, contradictory touches in her scheme of thought, as she expressed it at times, which puzzled him and suggested to him that she rarely let herself go.

He often paid a visit to the invalid in Myrtle Grove, much to her enlivenment, but not exactly to his own satisfaction. Miss Hill was by no means a querulous or complaining sufferer. She bore the many pains and deprivations attendant on spine disease with grim resolution rather than resignation. Her brain was still clear and active, and Adair soon found he could bring her no more acceptable gift than some new book treating of the social, political, or religious movements of the day, or of travels in out-of-the-way places and discoveries of ancient ruins.

These tastes, and a certain strain of cynicism,—the outcome, probably, of her misfortune,—rendered her rather difficult in the matter of acquaintances. The ordinary class of kindly, narrow, district-visiting elderly young ladies and serious-minded widows who delight in cosseting such invalids as Mary Hill bored her to death, and in their turn they shook their heads over her.

She enjoyed a talk with Norman Adair, and refrained from sneering at his bright, unphilosophic, optimist views. He, however, saw clearly after a few weeks that she was a difficult charge to her sister, who bore her fretfulness and short temper with angelic patience.

Yet at times Adair could see the profound love and tenderness which spoke in her eyes when they rested on Constance.

"Another supply of flowers, Norman!" she exclaimed, with a well-pleased smile, one fine afternoon towards the end of May, as he entered the little sitting-room in Myrtle Grove. "It is a new thing for me to have a smart young man presenting me with lovely blossoms. I delight in them. Ring, please. I will get my little handmaid to fill the vases." And she bent her head to inhale the perfume of Adair's welcome offering.

"Well, what news have you for me from the world?"

"Nothing very new," returned Adair, who looked more thoughtful and perhaps less joyous than when we first saw him. "I had a long letter from my mother this morning. They are going to the Italian lakes, and they want me to join them."

"Shall you?"

"Not yet. I find London very fascinating. Besides, I have business which will keep me——"

"That business of yours is remarkably elastic. When I first saw

you, two months ago, you hoped it would be finished in three weeks. I suppose you'll not be afloat this year?"

"No; I don't think so. I hear there is a place to be sold in my father's part of Galloway (you know he was Scotch), and I am going to have a look at it."

"You lucky boy! What a power money is! Yet rich people are generally odious: even you will grow disagreeable by and by, and then you must not come near me."

"What a terrible prophecy!" cried Adair, laughing. "There are exceptions to this rule, and I hope I shall be one. Your sister, now,—she is rich, and I am sure *she* is not odious."

"Rich! Constance?" in a high key. "She is the veriest pauper. Being married to a rich man only emphasizes a woman's poverty."

"Come, Miss Hill; a woman must share the good things of her husband's life. I am sure I should not like to think my wife wanted anything I could give her."

"No, I dare say not just at present. Wait,—wait till familiarity with wealth eats into your nature and subdues it: then you will look out for a wife with a lot of money, and then she will be welcome to whatever she can buy for herself."

"Oh, believe me, If she is not fair to me, What care I how rich she be?" said Adair, smiling.

Miss Hill looked at him rather indulgently, thinking what a fine-looking, though not handsome, man her old friend had grown, and what a good, honest, resolute face he had.

"But I am making myself disagreeable," she said. "I have been put out this morning. Constance sent my nephew George here with a message: she can't come to me; she has to copy papers or something for Mr. Crichton. I don't like that boy."

"He is a jolly little chap, though, and very like his father."

"He is," she returned, with intense acquiescence. "The other two are not, thank God!"

"Poor Crichton is in the back of your books, then," said Adair, lightly.

Miss Hill paused an instant, and then said, quietly and distinctly,—

"I hate him. He has destroyed what little was left me of life."

Adair was startled, and felt the awkwardness which always attends the discussion or avowal of family differences.

"Of course your sister was a great loss to you," he said, opening a way of escape if Miss Hill chose to give an amiable turn to her observations; "but, after all, a good marriage——"

"I don't, on the whole, object to marriage," she interrupted. "If she had married a man like you,—like what you are now,—I should not have felt it; but that man Crichton hates and despises me,—poverty is the one unpardonable sin in his eyes; and he is jealous of me, because his wife loves me. Nothing can change that. She is well named. Constancy is her special gift. I suppose she finds him all right; at least she never complains to me; but her high frank courage is all gone. Even with me she thinks before she speaks. What she ever saw in the man to love I don't know, but she did love him well."

He wasn't so bad in those days. Oh, no: he had still something to gain. He used to be nice to me. He would see that I never wanted for anything. Well, nor have I; but my own pittance pays for a good deal. He does add something, of course, or I could not get on; but then he robbed me of my beloved bread-winner. Ah, I have let myself go; but you will not betray me. Norman, *do* you think she is happy? Can she be happy with such a mammon-worshipper? He likes *you* because you are rich,—because you are an old friend who does credit to his wife and vouches in a way for her original position. I am a poor creature, a beggar and a disgrace. Do you know, it is two years since I beheld my brother-in-law! Can Constance be happy with a husband like that?"

"Good God! you surprise and pain me! Yes, I have always thought her happy: I believe she is. A man may be peculiar, yet not a bad husband. He is quick-tempered——"

"Quick!" she interrupted. "If you will not be shocked at such a word on the lips of an invalid who ought to be 'making her soul,' as the Irish say, he has an infernal temper,—uncertain, treacherous, unreasonable. There, I am false to Constance, running on in this way; and I am disappointed in her, too: she is afraid of that man,—her inferior. Now I will not say another word on this subject,—never again. Forget it all, Norman; bury it out of sight."

"I cannot quite forget, but I will bury it, and try to think less bitterly. Crichton is a very busy man: he——"

"No excuses. I will never change *my* ideas. What have you there, Jumbo?" (this to the diminutive servant who came in with a basket of splendid strawberries.)

"Please, 'm, they're from Mr. Andrews, the fruiterer, for you, mum."

"From Mrs. Crichton?"

"I dunno, 'm."

"I suspect I have to thank you, Norman, for these too."

"I saw some as I was passing near this, and went in to get them, but they were not quite fresh, and the man said he expected others: so I told him to send them in."

"You are an admirable young man, Norman," she said, with a sweet smile, that for the moment made her like her sister. "I love strawberries, and in a monotonous life such as mine one comes to think a good deal of what one eats and drinks. Unfortunately, there are so few things I like."

"Yes, that's unlucky. Then I must say good-by. I have paid you an unconscionably long visit."

"And done me a world of good. Come again when disposed to do a kind act."

Adair rearranged her cushions for her with kind, deft hands, and bade her adieu.

It was a beautiful afternoon, and he felt he must commune with himself uninterrupted. His ideas had been confused, his views disturbed, of late, and the conversation he had just had had thrown fresh light on his own mental condition. He turned into Kensington Gardens

and struck across them towards Hyde Park. The soft turf, the shade of the fine old trees, the pretty groups of children,—all was bright and pleasant, but Adair saw none of it. He was absorbed in the picture presented by his own imagination of the terrible life which he began to fear his new old friend led. His own observation in the few business transactions he had had with Crichton suggested that his love and greed for money amounted to a passion, and that there was a curious shiftiness about the man. Could he be cruel? If so, what a destiny for so charming a woman as Constance! and what would be the end thereof? How could she guard her children from the influence, perhaps the caprices, of such a father? Could it be possible that a woman of her mental calibre (for she had more than the ordinary amount of brain-power) was afraid of a man who was certainly her inferior? Her sister no doubt exaggerated things, but the idea had occurred to him before she had suggested it. Why, such a terrorized existence must be a hell upon earth. A wild fury rose in his heart against the brute who could thus trample upon such a beautiful nature. He felt he could crush out his worthless existence without the smallest hesitation. And then how clearly he saw her, the rich grace of her rounded figure, the sweet mouth, the eyes, the fine thoughtful eyes, that could laugh with so keen an appreciation of humor, or dwell on her children with such infinite tenderness, or shelter themselves behind a certain cautious quiet that defied penetration! What a woman to have beside you all the days of your life, and to love you as she could and would love a true-hearted husband! What right had such a man as Crichton to a noble, adorable companion like Constance? Then the full light pierced to Adair's soul in spite of the curtains of plausibility in which he had wrapped it, and he exclaimed, half aloud,—

"This is a pretty pass for an honest gentleman, as I hoped I was, to be fathoms deep in love with another man's wife! but I am; and I'd rather bear all, all I can see before me, than forego the delight of it to be with her, to hear her speak, to feel, as I do in some unaccountable way, that she trusts me. Perhaps I may be of use to her some day," he continued to muse as he unconsciously slackened his pace. "She has no brother, no near relative. I might act a brother's part,—though with infinite caution. Whatever suffering comes of it, it will be to me only. She has no thought of me,—of any one; she is loyalty itself to her husband; she has no room in her heart save for her children. I would never offend her by look or word. I will be her true, devoted friend, but I will gratify my own heart by loving her with all my soul and with all my strength." He walked on for some little way, absorbed in a heavenly vision of the woman who had utterly fascinated him and struck to the hitherto untouched depths of his inner life, maturing and developing with sudden electric power the slumbering forces of his more serious manhood. He was glad he had not had any temptation to go to sea again. Indeed, he now knew he would not have gone. But he would hereafter; he was not going to fritter away his life in ease and idleness; but he must ascertain how matters stood with Constance, and in what way he could serve her, before he left England. Then it would be wiser to go. These meditations

brought him to St. James's Park. As he passed by the mounted sentries at the Horse Guards, to his great surprise and annoyance he ran up against Mr. Crichton, who was evidently in deep reflection. "What a bad countenance the fellow has!" was the thought that flashed through Adair's brain as his eyes fell upon him.

"Halloo, Crichton!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing so far west?"

"What! Adair?" he returned, with the smile which changed his face so wonderfully. "I have been trespassing on your ground. I have been interviewing some of the people at the Admiralty."

"Indeed! Have they offered you the command of the Channel fleet?"

"No,—a much better offer for my purposes: they want me to send out a cargo of provisions to the troops in China; and I don't think I'll make a bad thing of it. By the way, would you care to go to the Mansion-House ball to-morrow night? It is to be an extra fine affair."

"Thank you. I don't think I should know any one there."

"Mrs. Crichton and I are going."

"Oh! I thought you had declined."

"Well, we had, but I met Black this morning (he is the Lord Mayor, you know), and he seemed anxious we should go. Very polite of him: so I promised we should. I am on my way home now to tell my wife. I say, Adair, no time for a new dress, eh?"

"Don't be too sure: there's such a thing as milliners' magic."

"I don't think they could manage it. By the bye, you know we are going to the country on Saturday?"

Adair nodded.

"I've found an old-fashioned little place, near Welwyn, on the Great Northern Line. You must come and see us there: pretty country, nice drives and walks, good air. Shall I send you a card for to-morrow night?"

"I should be very glad to go, if I am to meet you: you'll look after me in the Land of the Stranger."

Crichton laughed, and said good-by. Adair went on his way. He had heard about this ball, and remembered that Mrs. Crichton was very glad to have escaped it. She was busy preparing for their move to the country, and seemed to enjoy the prospect of the *villeggiatura*. He was sorry to think she should be troubled and wearied dressing and going to this festivity, merely because her husband's vanity was tickled by a personal invitation from the chief magistrate himself.

Before he reached the rooms where he had established himself, he made up his mind to pay an early visit to Sutherland Gardens the following day, a vague impression growing on him that he might be of use to Mrs. Crichton. If—if he could but serve her!

The next morning, however, he had himself an early visitor, an old messmate who happened to be passing through town. They had much to say to each other, and, though longing to get rid of him, Adair did not like to be uncivil: it was therefore half-past two before he reached his destination.

"Yes, sir, Mrs. Crichton is at home; but she is not very well, and said she would not see any one."

A curious sense that there was something seriously wrong made him exceedingly reluctant to accept this denial. Perhaps if she was in any trouble Constance might confide in him.

"Pray take my card. Possibly Mrs. Crichton might admit me."

"Certainly, sir. Pray walk in." And he was ushered into the morning room which had grown to be his elysium.

He paced restlessly to and fro, feeling unreasonably disturbed. Soon the servant returned, to say Mrs. Crichton was coming down to see him. Then he stood still, waiting.

In a few minutes she came. He never forgot any detail of her dress, of her aspect, that day. She wore a loose morning gown of lilac and white, the long folds of which made her look very tall; her hair was looser than usual, as if she had not cared to dress it; and her face was very white. But her eyes struck him most of all: there was a strained, terrified look in them that set his heart beating with a wild desire to carry her away from all sorrow and fear and trouble.

"It is good of you to come so soon again," she began, in a measured tone, as if she was carefully controlling her voice, and with a sort of sad smile.

"You are not well," he returned, taking the hand she offered, and shocked to find how burning and unsteady it felt. "You are not fit to go to this ball to-night." He looked earnestly into her eyes as he spoke.

"Oh, yes, I am; the doctor says I am. Mr. Crichton was rather put out this morning about my being unwell, so he went round to our doctor, who, unfortunately, lives close by, and brought him back to see me, and he says there is nothing the matter with me,—nothing!" And she laughed.

Her laugh decided Adair. "Look here, Constance—I beg your pardon, Mrs. Crichton: there's something very wrong with you. Can I not help you? Fancy I am your next of kin for the present. I wish I were!"

"So do I! Oh, so do I!" She drew her hand over her brow, and then rested the tips of her long white fingers on the table and paused. "Have you ever been in Nuremberg, Norman," she asked, turning her eyes away from his, "and seen the terrible Iron Maiden there?—a woman's figure that opens, and when the unfortunate victim was put inside, the doors, which are studded with long spikes, closed upon him, and he was left to die. Perhaps the worst part of the punishment was that the whole night before, the criminal was obliged to kneel in contemplation of the figure in which he was to be entombed. Norman," she exclaimed, in a different tone, and clasping her hands together, "I have been kneeling in contemplation of my supreme moment of torture all last night and all this day. I am such a despicable coward!"

"Just tell me what I can do," said Adair, briefly, afraid to trust himself with speech.

"I will! I will!" She unconsciously grasped his wrist. "I am

going to be—oh, so mean and unprincipled, you will despise me; but I *must* ask you. Perhaps some day you will understand why I am in this desperate strait. No, do not look at me, Norman. I only want money, a great deal of money, and at once,—immediately.”

“How much?” He held his arm steady, and did not attempt to clasp her poor, tremulous hands.

“More than two hundred pounds. I will tell you why.”

“No, it is not necessary. All I want is to relieve you from this awful state of distress.”

“But you must do more for me, Norman, than give me money, and I must explain. I—I have pawned my jewels, my necklace that my husband values so much, and you—that is, will you get them for me?”

“Yes, certainly; but we must be quick.”

“You have saved me, Norman!” she exclaimed, pressing her hand upon her heart, and then again grasping his wrist with an expressive shrinking almost against him. “I am so awfully afraid of my husband: he is so fierce,—so strong.” And her fingers pressed upon his throbbing pulse with more force than he had thought they possessed.

“Good God!” cried Adair, his eyes aflame, “what do *you* know of his strength?”

“No, no! of course nothing! It is my own miserable cowardly imagination. If I had been stronger and braver I should never have made the mistakes I did, and——”

“But he loves you? he must love you?” interrupted Adair.

“Yes, yes, sometimes, in his way.” A wave of color passed over her face, and a slight shudder as of loathing quivered through her frame. She slowly relaxed her hold, and, heaving a deep sigh of relief, said,—

“But I shall do better now, now you have set me free. Oh, Norman, do you understand that I can never repay you?—that I am begging this great sum from you as alms? Oh, how shameful it is!”

“No, it is not. I am one of your oldest friends. I am well off. I throw away far larger sums for mere self-indulgence. To have done this will always be a source of pleasure to me: to help you in any way is all I ask. I swear to be your faithful friend and brother. Now, there is no time to be lost. I must go to my bank in the Strand.”

“And I will bring you the tickets which you must show, if you will be so very good as to do this for me.”

“Yes, of course. Go, dear Mrs. Crichton, bring me those things.”

She went swiftly away. Adair stood quite still, in deep and painful thought. This tender, delicate, beloved woman was in truth beyond his reach. What was the utmost he could do for her?—merely purchase here or there a few minutes’ reprieve from the continuous torture of her life. She was hopelessly entangled in a mesh the threads of which no knife of human workmanship could sever. And in the coming years would her children bring her more of pleasure or of pain? It was a very open question. His heart bled for her, and he thanked Heaven he had acted on the presentiment which urged him to

call upon her that day. Had he not come to her in her hour of need, she would never have sent for him. But she interrupted his musing, and gave him the tickets she brought, adding a few words descriptive of the jewels, and the address where he would find them.

"Piccadilly? That's all right. My bank is in Pall Mall."

"You'll come back as quickly as you can?"

"Trust me." He was going, when he paused. "Any chance of Crichton returning before me?" he asked.

"It is impossible to say," she returned, the color which came back to her cheek fading so swiftly that he feared she would faint.

"For God's sake don't lose heart," he exclaimed. "I'll manage it. Before I come in I'll ask for him: if he is at home I'll pay a short visit and go on to Miss Hill's, where you will find your things."

"Ah, yes! Well thought, dear Norman! But I do hope there will be no need: Mary has no idea of my transactions: she would be shocked and distressed."

"How the deuce does she imagine you are to manage, then?" cried Adair, impatiently. "But I'm off. You shall see me back again before five-thirty, if I have any luck."

What words could describe that waiting? Every sound of the bell, the pause of a tradesman's cart at the entrance or of a visitor's carriage next door, the tread of a passer-by who seemed to linger at the steps, the foot of the distributor of circulars who mounted them to thrust his announcement into the letter-box,—each set her heart beating, her nerves thrilling. It seemed to her that now she was on the verge of deliverance the danger of discovery was tenfold greater than it had ever been. What ages seemed crowded into the bare three hours he had been away! And at last when he came she could hardly utter a word; dark shadows lay below her eyes and bespoke exhaustion both of mind and of body.

Adair came in empty-handed. "Oh, it is all right!" he exclaimed, in reply to her eager eyes; "only I would not bring the things in till I was sure the coast was clear. Now I'll get them and dismiss the cab,"—which he proceeded to do, and Mrs. Crichton strove to recover herself, while she breathed a thanksgiving for this great deliverance.

"Just look through the cases and see that they are right," said Adair, putting them on the table before her.

"I will, but in my own room. It is getting late." She gathered them together and ran up-stairs with them.

She returned quickly. "They are quite right," she said, and stopped; then, clasping her hands together and holding them out, she almost whispered, "I think you have saved my life, Norman! I dare not think of what might have been——"

"Do not think of it," he said, and took her hands in both his own for a moment. "But promise me one favor."

"Yes, willingly," she said, without an instant's hesitation.

"You may," he returned, with a certain sad dignity. "You may safely promise anything I ask. It is, never again to run so great a risk. Always remember that all I possess is at your service. Now I had better disappear. We'll meet at the ball."

That evening, as Mrs. Crichton was nearly ready, her husband came into her dressing-room. "Mind you put on *all* your jewels to-night," he said. "You won't be such a blaze as some of them, but you've a sprinkling of deuced fine stones, I can tell you."

"I cannot put on quite all I have," said his wife, smiling. "It would be rather a jumble." And she drew her jewel-case towards her.

"Are they all there?" he asked, with a curious gleam in his eyes.

"Yes, except what I have just taken off."

Mr. Crichton drew a chair, and began deliberately to examine the contents of the case, with which he seemed satisfied.

"It is an infernal nuisance your having had that headache this morning," he said, rising. "You look pale and washed out. By George! you were so queer and fidgety, you put some strange notions into my head."

"It was a nervous headache. I have had one or two lately," she replied, with a sigh. "I have had a good deal to do and to think of."

"Lord's sake, don't set up nerves!" he exclaimed. "What on earth *have* you to do, but to sit here all day and have everything found for you?—I say, Sarah," to the maid, who came in at that moment, "haven't you a rouge-pot anywhere about? Your missis looks as white as a ghost." And, laughing harshly, he went away.

CHAPTER IV.

A FEW days after the ball the Crichtons left town for their summer quarters, and for nearly a fortnight Adair received no communication from Mrs. Crichton. However, he often heard of her and the children from Miss Hill, to whom he paid frequent visits. Apart from the reflected interest she possessed for him, he liked to talk with her. She was shrewd and far-seeing, in spite of some crotchets and rather strong prejudices. Her heart was full of her sister, who had been as a daughter to her, though the difference in their years was not nearly so great as it seemed. But, though willing to talk about Constance and the children as much as ever Adair liked, she never again mentioned her brother-in-law.

One morning early in June, Adair sat reading the paper after breakfast, in an exceedingly restless and dissatisfied state of mind. He was sick of London, bored to death with dinners, nauseated with balls, teas, receptions, and all social usages, yet anchored to the hot, dusty, noisy city by his intense desire to see Mrs. Crichton and receive from her lips the explanation he was longing to hear and he suspected she was anxious to give. He was burning to look on her face, to hear her voice. How was he to live through his life without her? And yet he was capable of thanking God that she did not give him a thought that might not at most be bestowed upon a sympathetic brother or a useful friend. How was he ever to tear himself away from England, from the chance of being at hand to help her in any time of trouble? For she would be in trouble as long as her husband lived,

"and he is as strong as a horse," mused Adair, throwing aside his paper and standing up, with the intention of going out,—when a telegram was handed to him: "Can you call here this afternoon? Reply." It was signed Crichton, and dated from his office.

Need it be said that Adair faithfully kept the appointment, in a state of burning curiosity as to the tidings which awaited him?

Crichton welcomed him effusively, but, except a brief assurance that the wife and bairns were as "fit as fiddles," he did not mention them. His object in sending for Adair was to lay the project of another company before him and induce him to take shares and join the direction. Even to the sailor's inexperienced sense the affair seemed unsound, and he did not commit himself.

"Give me these papers and calculations. I'll study them a bit, and give you my answer in a day or two," he said. "I am keeping a few thousands free in case I meet with a chance of buying a 'residential property,' as the agents call it."

"What!" exclaimed Crichton, "throw away your money on land? Couldn't make a greater mistake. Land has had its day, I can tell you. Suppose you come down to our little cabin with me by the sixteen train, stay over Sunday, and study this matter in the quiet of the country. It's a pretty, fresh little place. The missis will be pleased to see you. We can't put you up, but there's a nice clean inn in the village, where they'll make you comfortable, not ten minutes from our place. Say yes, and I'll let you go; for I have fifty things to get through before I leave. Meet me at King's Cross, hey?"

"I shall be delighted, and thank you," returned Adair, wondering if Crichton could hear his heart, so strongly did it beat against his ribs.

So in a moment the meeting for which he had been pining was brought about.

It was a glorious evening when they reached the small station of Stanfield, where they found a somewhat battered, dusty, low phaeton and a rough, ungroomed, sturdy pony waiting for them. An equally ungroomed boy and Mr. Crichton's capriciously petted son and heir were in charge of the vehicle. The child ran to kiss his father, and stood by him while he gave some directions to the porter; and Adair noticed that the little fellow stole watchful glances at Crichton's face, as if to ascertain what his mood was. But the father was in a temper as sunny as the skies, and tenderly embraced his boy. "I haven't a very stylish turnout, you see," he said, good-humoredly. "But we must have something to go to and from the trains: so I hired this trap with the house,—got the whole concern a bargain. You see, this place is quite out of the beat of summer visitors; heard of it by the merest chance," etc.: so he went on detailing particulars of his agreement and chuckling over his own acuteness, while Adair feasted his eyes on the richly wooded undulating country, and the gray-green of the meadows now almost ripe for the scythe. "We'll stop and secure your room as we pass through the village," resumed Crichton, "and leave your bag."

"Oh," cried little George, "mother and me, we saw to all that as we came along; then she went back by the fields."

"Oh! all right. I'm glad she thought of it. I sent her a wire as soon as you left to-day. You see she has me under her thumb; dare not bring home a guest without giving due notice." And he laughed exultingly.

Leaving the village, they turned down a delightful green shady lane, which soon descended to a broad, shallow, clear stream, through which carriages drove, while foot-passengers were accommodated with a much-mended picturesque old timber foot-bridge. The opposite side rose rather steeply. The lower part of the slope was covered with soft, vividly green turf, bordered by shrubs and flowers, and crowned by a small old-fashioned cottage so covered with clematis and roses that no one could see whether the walls were of brick or of stone.

"There's Riverhill," said Mr. Crichton, pointing to it with his whip.

"And there's mother and Winnie going to the gate," cried George. Adair had already caught sight of some white drapery fluttering among the trees. But the round-barrelled pony was now scrambling up the rough, stony, steep ascent from the ford, and soon stopped, standing sideways across the road, before a little green gate, at which stood Mrs. Crichton.

"Jump out," said Crichton. "I'll drive round to the farm-yard."

The next moment Adair held Mrs. Crichton's hand and was striving to steady his own. As their eyes met, she blushed deeply and her eyes sunk; but this tempting manifestation did not mislead Adair: it only filled him with regret that the sense of obligation to him should be painful to her. He covered the momentary awkwardness by catching up Winnie, who clamored for his notice, and bestowing sundry kisses on her bright face.

"I began to think I was never to see you again," he exclaimed, with his ordinary frank cheerfulness, as they walked together to the house. "But I heard of you frequently from your sister."

"Yes; I am so grateful to you for going to see her. Poor dear thing, it is a sad time for her when I am away. I should love to have her down here, or anywhere in the country; but it is simply impossible." Here baby toddled out to meet them, and steadied himself by his mother's finger. "Don't my little gypsies look brown and well?"

"They do, indeed,—and you too. I am glad to see you have a touch of healthy bronze,—sun-kisses."

She raised her eyes to his with something of an effort.

"I am much—much better, thank *you*," she said, with some emphasis and a smile that conveyed to Adair a world of gratitude and trust. "The lawn is my drawing-room on fine days," she resumed: "it is a little dark in-doors." And she led the way to the farther side of the house, where there was a view over a more open country, with a distant line of misty blue hills. Here was a table on which were a work-basket, some books, and Winnie's doll, with several chairs, large and small.

Mrs. Crichton and her guest sat down, and fell into ordinary conversation about the invalid sister and Adair's own people. There was

no further sign of embarrassment on her side, and she grew every minute calmer and more at ease. Yet it was different from their former intercourse. They had a secret between them unknown to her husband, and it seemed an indissoluble link binding them together. Moreover, it gave a secret meaning to every word that passed between them, a sense of union that separated them from all others.

Mr. Crichton soon joined them. He was in a contented frame of mind, and got through a very appetizing little dinner with scarce any fault-finding. He talked intelligently enough on Indian topics. Mrs. Crichton proposed coffee out of doors, to which her husband assented.

"Yes, it's a pretty country," he said, in reply to a remark of Adair's as they sat smoking their cigarettes in the delicious fragrant coolness of the summer evening. "Just the country for riding. But I don't keep horses now. In fact, a horse *and* a wife are too great a strain on ordinary resources; and I chose a wife, the costlier thing of the two."

"How can you allow him to utter such blasphemy, Mrs. Crichton?" exclaimed Adair, looking keenly at her to see how she took her husband's polite speech.

"I cannot dispute its truth, you see," she said, quite placidly. "Moreover, you cannot sell a wife at Tattersall's if you wish to curtail your expenses."

"Exactly!" returned Crichton, with a laugh. "Never mind, Con: I don't want to sell you just yet."

The remark suggested a happy thought to Adair. "I have been tempted to buy a couple of horses," he said, "and now I scarcely know what to do with them, for my plans are all unsettled. Do you think I could find stabling for them here? And perhaps you would help me to exercise them. We might see a good bit of the country together. —You used to ride in former times, Mrs. Crichton," turning to her: "suppose you try again."

"Oh, no: I am afraid that rambling about on my poor old shaggy pony could hardly be considered riding," said Mrs. Crichton, with a pleasant, musical laugh.

"No, no: I don't fancy she could stick on now: somehow she seems to have lost all her nerve; and she used to be plucky enough."

Adair kept his eyes on the ground, and did not dare to raise them for a minute or two, knowing they might betray too much. "Well, we'll have a look at the inn stables," he said, "if you like the idea; and we might start a dog-cart for madam's benefit."

"Like the idea! Why, my dear fellow, it's first-rate! I should enjoy some riding beyond everything. I can't tell you how I missed my horses at first. But, by Jove, *you* must drive the dog-cart: driving I never did care for."

While he spoke, Mrs. Crichton rose and went softly away into the house.

Adair looked after her.

"Oh, never mind," said the husband. "She's gone to look at the youngsters,—always does. She's a deuced sight too fidgety about them: she's as weak as water, and gives them their own way."

"I never saw better-behaved children in my life," cried Adair.
"My good fellow, you don't live in the house with them."

The stabling proved good enough for Adair's purpose, and the horses were soon established in the village, much to Crichton's satisfaction,—rather too much, it seemed to his guest, for he contrived to stay away from business very frequently, and rode too many stone to be quite good for the steeds. Moreover, though Adair insisted on his riding them alternately, he was glad to let them rest when Crichton did go to town, and so his project of taking Mrs. Crichton out driving was defeated for some time. Then came a rush of business, and Crichton went to the city with tolerable regularity. But, in spite of all difficulties and every *contre-temps*, it was a heavenly time to Adair. There were hours of quiet intercourse, of unuttered sympathy, when the sense of his beloved companion's trust in him, of her reliance on him, lapped him in elysium. Yet a jury of the severest matrons might have listened without a frown to every word they said to each other. They were very seldom alone together. If Crichton was away the children were always there,—often the nurse.

"A telegram for you, ma'am," said the parlor-maid, whom they had brought with them, coming from the house just as Mrs. Crichton and Adair began to conjecture that something must have detained Mr. Crichton.

"He is not coming to-night," she said, handing it to her companion.

"Will not return to-day. Letter by first post to-morrow," was all it said.

"I had no idea he had anything on hand likely to call him away," remarked Mrs. Crichton, thoughtfully.

"It seems to me he is not coming back to-morrow," observed Adair.

"No? Well, we shall know all in the morning."

And they proceeded to dine very cheerfully and happily. Winnie and George were allowed to sit up till it was quite dark, and Adair showed them how to play backgammon. Then he forced himself to leave his paradise earlier than usual, saying he would not come over next morning till after breakfast.

It behooved him to watch over her carefully. She was too innocent of evil to heed appearances, and her husband, careless and wrapped up in himself, would see nothing save his own pleasure and convenience until some accident roused his jealousy, and then he would be merciless. He lay long awake, thinking of the life which lay before this woman who had entered into his soul and dwelt there; but this was nothing new to him now. Yes, she was in bondage from which nothing could liberate her, and her master, though nearly twenty years her senior, might live to any age, he was so strong, so careful.

Mrs. Crichton was established in her out-door morning room, writing, when he joined her. "Mr. Crichton has gone to Glasgow," she said, as soon as they had exchanged greetings. "Something has gone wrong about his latest company: he is afraid some one is guilty

of double-dealing: so he is gone, breathing out threatenings and slaughter."

"I wish he would stick to his regular business," said Adair, taking the newspaper, and throwing himself on the grass, where he could look up unobtrusively into the eyes he loved. "These by-ways of money-making so often lead to quagmires and shifting sands."

Mrs. Crichton finished addressing her letter, and leaned back in her chair without speaking for a moment; then she said, very gravely, as if to herself, "I am sometimes frightened at my husband's eagerness to make money. It is like insanity." She shuddered. "You must have noticed it, Norman."

He nodded his head, anxious not to check by any words her inclination to speak out her thoughts.

"Yes, any one living with us must observe it; but no one really knows its full extent as I do. I fear, as it increases (and it does increase),—I fear the effect it may have on the children's future,—their education."

"But he is very well off?"

"Yes, I believe so. There is abundant internal evidence that he never spends more than half he might." And she smiled rather sadly. "Perhaps I ought not to speak in this strain; but, Norman, you are very safe, and I have been brooding in silence over so much that makes me uneasy that the relief of speaking out my fears to a safe sympathetic friend is too great a temptation."

"You know I am both," he said, in a low tone, not allowing his eyes to meet hers.

"Yes. I have never trusted any living soul since I was married. Mary is out of the question, for——" She stopped suddenly, and then resumed in a different tone: "Do not join any more of Mr. Crichton's companies, Norman: you must not be robbed by the husband as well as the wife." She flushed crimson.

"Mrs. Crichton, you are unkind!" he exclaimed.

She did not seem to heed him. Claspings her hands, she went on in a low tone: "What would have become of me that day if you had not saved me? I tremble to think of it. He can be terrible; and he is so strong."

"My God! do you mean to say that—you have suffered from his strength?" cried Adair, white with an agony he could not hide.

"Oh, no, no! not that; he has never quite struck me; but I always fear—— And then, you know, he would have been in his rights. Think, if *your* wife had pawned her jewels, the jewels you had given her! Oh, Norman, it was too disgraceful!"

"That depends. I don't know why you did it."

She did not answer. There was a pause.

"They are all right now?" asked Adair.

"At present, quite right. Do you know he—Mr. Crichton—has such an extraordinary prophetic instinct as regards anything that touches his property, his interest, that he seemed to divine why I was unwell—why I wanted to escape that ball? He turned over the whole contents of my—no, not *my*—of *his* jewel-case which he lends me."

Adair muttered something. "Imagine, then, how I blessed you. But I am saying far more than I intended. I am ashamed of myself."

"For heaven's sake, snatch what relief you can, and never let yourself be in such a strait again. You know you need not," he said, meaningly. "Now I am not going to let you dwell on these painful topics, unless you want me to help you out of the lion's den."

"That I never shall, Norman: I must live and die in it."

"Then I propose that after luncheon we take a long drive by Knebworth, and let Winnie and George come. My groom will take care of one of them behind: he is a steady fellow. The country will look lovely after these last two showery days."

"Yes, thank you, Norman: it will revive me. How good and thoughtful you are!"

CHAPTER V.

THE barrier of reserve was now quite broken down, and, though Mrs. Crichton did her best to avoid the subject of her own difficulties and sufferings, bit by bit the picture of her married life was unrolled to Adair's eyes. Nor was she aware how vividly she painted it.

Left wretchedly poor at the death of their father, the sisters moved from the parsonage to the neighboring county town, where Constance eked out their small income by teaching in one of the "establishments for young ladies," which had at that date been converted into "colleges" or "high schools." Here she met Crichton, who was passing a few days with the family of one of her pupils. He was fascinated, and knew no rest till he had secured what, for the moment, seemed to him a pearl of great price.

Later the pearl seemed a trifle too costly. His air of disinterested generosity, the glamour of unconscious deceitfulness which enwraps a man dazed and blinded by fierce passion, overwhelmed Constance with a sense of gratitude, and the responsiveness naturally awakened by the exhibition of such ardent feeling made her fancy she loved in return. Had this ardor toned down, as, thank God, it often does, into kindly considerate friendship, she would have loved him warmly and well to their lives' end. But his nature forbade such a blessed result.

"No woman who is very poor ought to marry," she said, one day when they had been discussing an article in one of the graver magazines on French marriages. "She is perhaps felt to be less a burden by a poor man than by a rich one; she can do more to help in a humble *ménage* than in a grand one: still, she is a burden; and to wed a wealthy man when you have nothing is to become a life-long dependant. I shall never forget how I felt when George said, one day he wished to ride and had no horse, 'You see, Con, if you had brought some funds into the concern I should not have an empty stable.' I was overwhelmed with a sense of misery and beggary I cannot describe. Of course that was just at first. Things do not affect me now in that way."

"Why did you not threaten to leave him?" cried Adair: "it

would have brought him to his senses if you had shown that you knew your own value."

"But, unfortunately, I felt at the moment that my value was as nothing compared to that of a horse. And as to going away, where could I go? I had nothing I could call my own, and no relative or friend who would have helped me or taken my part. Then I hoped when Georgie was born things would go better; and they did, for a while. There were interludes of hope and peace; but they have grown shorter. It was these gleams of hope that destroyed me. Perhaps had I sooner recognized that I had to fight for my life I might have asserted myself. But I always wished to win him by fair means,—to influence him." She laughed, not at all bitterly. "As if any one could influence him who had no pedestal of gold to stand upon. So I sank lower and lower under his rule."

Later Adair gathered that on his marriage Crichton voluntarily promised his wife that her sister should never want for any comfort. This promise she accepted readily, as in marrying she withdrew her own contributions to her sister's maintenance. What, then, was her dismay to find that the payments of the small quarterly sums he had suggested as an addition to the invalid's income were soon very reluctantly made, then irregularly, then the amount diminished on the plea of making it up next time,—which he usually failed to do!

This led to his wife's first difficulties. She was tempted to pay certain little debts incurred for her sister out of her housekeeping allowance. On telling her husband this as a reason for urging him to make good his shortcomings, she roused such a storm of threats of vengeance in the shape of a personal attack on the poor invalid that she never dared to be candid again, but went on, hoping against hope to save something from her allowance or to coax an occasional gift out of her lord and master when he was in a good humor,—an event which grew rarer each year. Thus Mrs. Crichton got into a tangle of difficulties, was tempted to try the fatal expedient of borrowing money, and was charmed to find with what ease she procured it. Then came the awful necessity for repayment, with interest, and she was driven to pledge some of her jewels to put herself straight. So she got into a terrible groove, borrowing to make up deficits in the winter, pledging her jewels to pay when they went out of town for the summer, until her life was a continued terror, and every day made confession more and more impossible, and her sense of degradation more and more pitiable.

"I grew so accustomed to this system," she said to Adair one evening as they sat talking in-doors after the children had gone to bed, for it was chill and breezy, "that at any time I would take a brooch or a pair of ear-rings to exchange for a little ready money, rather than ask Mr. Crichton for it. I do think, Norman, his craze about money is insanity."

"What! used you to go all the way to Piccadilly?" asked Adair, shrewdly.

"Oh, no: for small transactions I went to a shabby little place in the Edgware Road. I wonder if you could ever realize what my sense

of relief and safety is when I reflect that my jewels are safe and that I am clear of debt?" She stretched out her hand frankly to Adair, who took and held it gently, loyally, for a moment, looking at her fair sweet face in wonder, as a vision of the long years of continuous torture which she had endured flashed across his brain.

"You were awfully weak!" he exclaimed; "but, my God! who could blame you? And you speak of this man without anger!"

"Oh, the period when I felt racking passions of indignation and despair has long gone by. Mr. Crichton is now a tremendous necessity to be reckoned with. And, Norman, a mother dares not despair. I must live on, and live with him, keeping the home as peaceful as I can, for the sake of my darlings. God knows how bitterly I regretted the birth of each; but, now they are in life, I give mine to them utterly. Perhaps the cruellest effect of all is the loss of my self-respect. Shall I ever win it back? But at least I have the courage of my cowardice, and will never attempt to leave my husband, because it would mean either parting from my children or separating them from their father; and he is fond of them now. His affection for them may yet humanize him, if their increasing cost does not displease him. Besides, I don't suppose I could get a separation. He has never absolutely ill-treated me, and I have been fed, clothed, and lodged adequately. Oh, Norman! it is half-past nine. I have talked to you the whole evening of my hopeless troubles; and you are so patient. But, though it may bore you, it seems to lighten my load; and Mr. Crichton will be back on Saturday."

"You never tire or trouble me," said Adair, rising and pacing to and fro slowly. "I want you to give me a promise," he said, pausing opposite her and grasping the top of the chair on which he had been sitting. "Will you?"

"What is it?" she asked, with a smile.

"When you are in any difficulty or strait whatever, let me know. I ask nothing more than to help you."

"I earnestly pray I may never want help again, Norman. I will try not to. As it is, you have given me courage enough to speak seriously to Mr. Crichton about the allowance to my sister. I am determined to press for this."

"You ought," said Adair. "Be firm about this. Poor soul! it is cruel to curtail any pleasure or comfort she can enjoy. Why, he cannot be human, to torture any fellow-creature as he does you."

"Part of the torture he is unaware of," she said, thoughtfully. "I think, Norman, I shall take advantage of my brief freedom to run up and see my sister to-morrow. Mr. Crichton is not pleased when I spend a day 'out.'"

"Do. I will stay here as head-nurse in your absence and look after the youngsters."

She looked at him with suddenly awakened understanding as the idea dawned upon her of his tender care to guard her against misrepresentation.

"Thank you," she said, in a low voice, as a soft color slowly overspread her cheek. "You are a true friend."

"I think I may claim that title, Mrs. Crichton. Treat me as one. I shall feel honored."

"I will," she said, then paused, and repeated, "I will."

"Good-night, then. What train will you take to-morrow?"

"There's one at nine-thirty. I should like to catch it."

"All right. I'll be here by nine and drive you to the station."

The end of September saw the Crichtons settled for the winter in Sutherland Gardens.

Adair had forced himself to accept an invitation to Scotland, and another to Yorkshire, for shooting. He was nervously anxious to avoid rousing Crichton's or indeed any one's suspicions as to his own devotion to his old friend and playfellow. He realized how pitiless a man they had to deal with, and that any breach which could possibly come between Constance and her children would be death to her. He sometimes feared his own power over himself as time deepened and broadened the stream of passionate affection which welled up within his heart. But he underrated his own strength.

At last he permitted himself to return and call on Mr. Crichton at his office. He found that gentleman looking stern and gloomy and generally forbidding. However, he welcomed Adair cordially enough, and asked him to dinner the next day.

"Mrs. Crichton has not been very well," he said, in reply to Adair's inquiries. "The baby has been ailing, and his mother has been in a desponding mood about him, also about her sister, who is, she fancies, going to die. It would be a great release if she did. Whatever you do, Adair, don't marry a woman with an ailing sister."

"I don't think I should mind that, if I liked the woman," returned Adair, good-humoredly; and, gladly taking advantage of a clerk's entrance with a slip of paper, he added, "I see you are busy: so I'll postpone the rest of my visit till dinner-time to-morrow."

"All right," replied Crichton. "It is my lawyer. His are golden moments, and, unfortunately, the gold comes out of my cash-box."

Adair's heart beat fast as he entered the familiar precincts of his beloved's home. He ventured to go rather early; and all the gloom and probable pain of the future, with its almost inevitable trials, were swallowed up in the unutterable joy of seeing her again, of feeling her soft hand in his, and of looking into her inscrutable lovely eyes,—for to him they were lovely.

She was alone, and trying to read by the fire-light, so he was not able to see her face very distinctly at first, but there was genuine pleasure in her voice as she exclaimed, "I am so glad to see you again!" He had to collect his senses before he could answer with suitable composure.

"And you, Mrs. Crichton,—how have you been?"

She did not reply till the servant had lighted the lamps and had left the room; then he saw that she looked worn and thin, and that her eyes seemed too large for her face.

"I? I have not been quite well; but I cannot go into that now. Another time."

Adair bowed. "And the children: am I too late to see them?"

"Oh, no: they will be so glad."

She rang for the little ones, and they came eagerly, allowing of no talk save their own for half an hour, when Nurse marched them off to bed.

When they were left together, the silence remained unbroken for a minute; then Adair raised his eyes to hers and said, "Well?"

Her color rose slowly as she replied, "Not very well: though I have been trying to live up to the standard you set before me; but I will tell you the result later. Come and see me soon,—the day after to-morrow. Now tell me what you have been doing."

Adair complied, and they were talking merrily when Crichton came in.

He seemed brighter and more amiable than he was the day before. He talked freely enough to Adair, detailing how he managed to trace some underhand dealings of the secretary to one of his companies, and declaring his intention not to dabble in such concerns any more.

Adair observed that he did not take the slightest notice of his wife, who preserved her usual steady composure, though now and then he saw that she stole a watchful glance at her husband when he was looking away. There was a certain constraint over the trio, though Adair did his best to talk on all sorts of abstract topics and to be as animated as possible. Crichton, however, always came back to the City and the Stock Exchange.

At last, to Adair's relief, it was time to say good-night. Yet he felt, as he always did when parting with her, a desperate reluctance to leave Constance alone with her husband. Crichton had an ungovernable temper, and God only knew what tragedy might occur before Adair saw her again. Life was growing one long, feverish "waiting" to him.

Town was still empty,—it was the first week of October,—and Adair had therefore fewer calls to make or engagements to break his constant brooding; but "time and the hour run through the darkest day," and once more he was at luncheon with Mrs. Crichton and her children, who were charmed to see their favorite playmate.

"They have grown since I saw them last, especially George," said Adair, as they rose from table.

"Oh, George is considerably advanced," said his mother, stroking his head and pressing it against her. "He goes to a preparatory school now nearly all day."

"Yes," said George, proudly, "it is ever so much better to have boys to play with."

"I remember thinking the same thing when I was a youngster. What barbarians boys are!" said Adair, laughing.

"They cannot help it," returned Mrs. Crichton, thoughtfully. "It has always seemed to me that there is no real sympathy between men and women.—Come, children, you must go out while the day is bright and warm: you can leave Georgie at school."

"Don't let them come to the door with me, mother," urged Georgie: "I can go quite well down the street alone."

"Very well," said his mother, smiling.

"Now tell me how it has been with you all these days," asked Adair, when they were safe in the comfortable morning room.

He leaned his shoulder against the end of the mantel-piece and looked down at her as she sat by her work-table embroidering a frock for baby.

"I have nothing new to tell," she said, without looking up from her work. "Things go on in the old way. I did make the effort I promised. I asked Mr. Crichton to fix a certain allowance for my sister, and to pay it regularly. I asked it quietly and reasonably; but, oh, Norman, he made an awful scene!—worse than any hitherto. I was dreadfully frightened, but I kept a better front than I ever did before. Still, the strain since has been great. Of course he said a great deal that was fierce and cruel; but the next day when he was less excited I said that if he would not agree to that I must get her what was necessary out of the house allowance. He was not quite so wild then, but he swore a good deal, and, with a degree of composure which looked like earnest, said he would immediately change his will and leave his managing clerk, Phillips,—a man I particularly dislike, —executor and guardian to the children, with a very small life-income to myself, as he would not leave his hard-earned money to be squandered on sickly beggars. Then my baby has been ill, and my poor Mary has had a terrible attack of pain. It is wonderfully good of you to come and see me; for I always have a catalogue of woes to detail."

She looked up to him with a slight smile, and, laying down her work, leaned back in her seat, dropping her right hand over the arm of the chair despondently.

"All that you have to tell has absorbing interest for me," said Adair. "I shall go and see your sister when I leave you. This threat about the will is serious. Now I remember, Mr. Crichton was engaged with his lawyer when I called on him the other day."

"I can do nothing," she returned; "and, oh, I am so dreadfully weary! There is no use in talking of my affairs. Tell me of your own. Have you made up your mind as to your future? When do you intend to go to sea?"

"I don't know. I cannot leave England at present."

"But you love your profession, Norman, and I don't think you would be happy as an idle gentleman."

"I do not think of happiness!" he exclaimed, beginning to pace to and fro restlessly; "but, Mrs. Crichton, I cannot—I cannot leave you unprotected, unaided, to the misery and danger of your life. I will not!"

"Norman," she returned, after a brief pause, for his voice as well as his words was a startling revelation to her, "this is more than I ought to expect,—more than you ought to offer. You have done me the greatest service already. Even were you my brother you would not sacrifice your career for me."

"Look on me as a brother who is ready to do that—and more," he said, pausing opposite to her. "I will wait within reach until—until

some deliverance, some amelioration of your bitter lot, comes to you. I humbly, earnestly beg you to accept this service."

Mrs. Crichton leaned her elbow on the little table beside her, covered her face with her hand, and kept silence for a minute.

"No, Norman," she said, looking up to him with calm grave eyes and a white face, "this is more than you ought to do for me,—more than, as a true friend, I ought to permit. Our lives must always be apart, and I could never in any way repay such devotion. I dare not accept it, Norman."

"Do you think I would ever ask anything in return?" he exclaimed, resuming his troubled walk. "Don't you see there is a certain selfishness in my wish to be at hand should you need me? Great heavens! how could I rest, how could I give my mind to anything, haunted as I should be night and day by the picture of you and those little ones at the mercy of such a—of Crichton. You don't know how the knowledge of what you endure has sunk into my heart and possessed my soul."

Then Mrs. Crichton spoke, earnestly, impressively, of the folly and imprudence of such a line of conduct; and, while he seemed to listen, Adair collected his thoughts, and perceived the mistake he had made in showing his hand. He would oppose her no more openly, but he would act in accordance with his own inclinations.

"You are awfully severe," he said, at length, in a lighter tone than he had yet used. "I'll think of your good advice, and——" He broke off, and then resumed: "Even if I were to begin worrying for a ship to-morrow, don't suppose I should be appointed to one for months, however I might try. Anyhow, while I am ashore, for God's sake make use of me. Promise me this much."

"Yes, I do promise, if you promise to be sensible, to take up your life seriously, and not let any dreams of helping me—which you could only do in some masked way, which I ought never to accept, and hope never again to seek—interfere with your plans."

"I will be guided by you. I will do *anything*, if you will only trust me!" he exclaimed, imploringly.

"Oh, Norman, you are kind and true. How can I reject the help that seems sent to me by a merciful Providence?" cried the sorely tried woman, covering her face with her hands to hide the tears which would come.

Adair turned away and walked to the end of the room: he dared not look at her.

In a few moments she regained self-control.

"You said you were going to see my sister," she began, not quite steadily.

"And you want me to go?" he said, turning quickly.

"Yes, Norman."

"Suppose you come with me?"

"No; not to-day."

"All right: I'll go. And—I may come and see you again in a day or two? Remember, I am going to put myself under your guidance and be sensible, selfish, practical,—what you like."

"Very well, Norman." She held out her hand: it was cold and tremulous. He pressed it close.

"Don't despair," he said, huskily. "If we don't know the evil, neither do we know the good, which awaits us. Put me out of your mind, except as a useful servant whom you can summon in time of need."

CHAPTER VI.

A COUPLE of days later a telegram was handed to Adair as he sat at breakfast in the chambers where he had established himself, intending to make London his head-quarters for some time to come. Opening it, he read with great surprise that it was from his mother and dated from Paris; while he had believed she was at Nice. "Meet us at Charing Cross this evening. Secure rooms at Grosvenor," ran the brief despatch.

"This is sudden," thought Adair. "What can have started them off? Effie can't be worse, or she could not travel,—not so fast,—and my mother is not whimsical. Well, I'll be glad to see them again. I wonder what they mean to do with themselves this winter."

Yet he was a little ashamed of not feeling gladder. His first vivid thought was, "How will their presence affect my friendship with Mrs. Crichton?" A little more reflection suggested that it might, on the whole, be favorable to more frequent meetings,—meetings less dangerously delightful because shared by others, yet opportunities of being with *her*, the one "her" in the world then for him.

He ought to let Mrs. Crichton know that his mother and sister were coming, to explain that he would probably be occupied next day, when he had intended to call. All this could be said in a note, of course. Perhaps it would be better to write; but then, as he should lose his intended visit to-morrow, he had a right to discount it to-day. Besides— Well, anyhow he would call, and say his say face to face.

First he would walk over to Victoria and secure rooms for his people, and go on to Sutherland Gardens after. "I am sure to find her at home early." But he was disappointed.

The civil smiling parlor-maid informed him that Mrs. Crichton had taken the baby, who had had a very bad night, to Dr. W——'s, naming a well-known doctor who made children his specialty, and she (the speaker) did not know when she would be back.

Adair was therefore reduced to write and resign himself to a prolonged absence of a few hours, which seemed an intolerable age to him.

It was a long, tiresome day, but it came to an end at last, and Adair stood waiting on the platform within a few minutes of the hour at which the Paris express was due.

It arrived with the usual punctuality, and Adair soon found himself in his sister's arms, while his mother contented herself with a hasty kiss and hand-pressure.

"I hope all's well with you?" he cried, heartily. "Your telegram gave me a start this morning, I can tell you. But I am delighted to

see you.—Anything wrong, Effie?" to his sister, who was and evidently had been weeping.

"Wrong? Ah, yes. But I will tell you when we are alone."

These words startled her brother considerably, for Effie was a quiet, practical, "douce-like" creature, who rarely showed much emotion, and whose delicate health made her an object of constant care to her mother. Mrs. Adair was a woman of shrewd sense and strong character, who, perhaps unconsciously, tyrannized over her submissive daughter.

"Eh, Norman, my dearie! it does me good to see you again. Oh, Effie has been just a new creature, with the change and the fine air, up to a week ago; and now she is as you see. But you shall hear all about it when we are alone."

"What mysteries are afoot?" asked Norman, laughing. "Well, come along. Can your maid look after your baggage and see it through the custom-house?"

"Oh, yes, to be sure: she is as good as a courier."

"Here, then, get into this cab. I have ordered dinner for you, and your courier can follow."

"Well, it is nice to hear English spoken all round you, after listening to French and German and Italian for near two years!" exclaimed Mrs. Adair, half an hour later, when she and her daughter after a hasty toilette sat down to an appetizing little dinner, her brow clearing as she looked at her son. "I have just been wearying to see you and take counsel with you.—Effie, dry your eyes, child, and eat a bit: you ought to be famished by now; and it's my belief that neither mind nor body works properly if you cannot eat; and you never wanted the use of your judgment more than at the present time."

"Take a little champagne, old girl," said Adair, kindly. "I don't like to see you in the down-below. You know if I can give you a helping hand I will. In spite of the tears, you are looking pounds better than when I left you at Florence this time last year."

"Thank you, Norman dear," murmured Effie, putting away her pocket-handkerchief and sipping her champagne, while her brother, not feeling much mental disturbance, continued his dinner with cheerful attention.

Mrs. Adair did most of the talking, and sprinkled her talk with dim allusions to "Effie's trouble" and "Effie's improvement until she became first taken up with havers," etc. As soon as dinner was over, the object of these remarks expressed a wish to go to bed, as she could not sit up any longer, and, pressing her brother's hand as she left the room, whispered a request that he would stand by her.

"What is it all about, mother?" asked Norman, returning to the table and refilling his glass.

"It isn't well to speak of family matters in a public room. Come up to my chamber,—it's like a drawing-room,—and have a cigar, while I explain things a bit. I'm sure I'm sore in need of a word of counsel."

"By all means, mother. I'll just settle for dinner, and follow you in a minute or two."

"Well, my dear lad," began Mrs. Adair as soon as her son joined

her, "we had a beautiful time at first, and I didn't know myself, with money enough for everything we wanted, and no need to be worrying over the pennies; while the color was coming into Effie's pale cheeks, and light into her eyes, all thanks to you, my son."

Adair laughed and waved his hand deprecatingly.

"We made many nice and elegant friends, as I have recounted to you in my weekly letters, which I cannot say you have replied to with the regularity I could have wished. But young men are heedless. Well, all was quiet and happy till last April. We had stayed on at St. Remo, and there our friends Mr. and Mrs. Hooper—very charming people, just given up to art and music and that sort of thing, having no bairns—introduced a very intelligent young man, one Mr. Hargrave, rather in delicate health, and looking the worse of wearing his hair long and having big black uncanny sort of eyes. They said he was a man of genius. Anyhow, he played the fiddle wonderfully; but I found it rather heart-breaking to listen to him. He was only half English. His mother was Italian, a Countess something, I believe. He was very pleasant, and took no end of trouble to find us summer lodgings in the hills, at a lovely spot. I wrote to you about it, you'll remember. But I didn't bargain for his taking a room in the same ramshackle old inn; but he did, and used to sit upon a rock and fiddle away by the hour. Effie said it was divine; I thought it was like a cat with a pain in its stomach. Then he began to teach Effie Italian; and really she got on surprisingly well; but one day, to my disgust, I found him on his knees in the garden, kissing her hand, and she crying salt tears. I didn't show how angry I was: I spoke him fair: they are a wicked, revengeful set, those Italians: he was brought up in Romish errors, too, and could pay for a murder, and have it wiped out as easy as possible. I just asked what it all meant; and he made a speech as long as my arm about his adoration and devotion to my poor bit girlie, and talked of the golden glory of her hair,—meaning her red head,—and she drinking it all in. I did think she was more wise-like. So I gave him a piece of my mind, and told him that the young lady had no fortune, but was dependent on her brother, who would likely marry and not want to be hampered with her. Then—my word! but he threw his arms about, and swore, just awfully, that he only wanted the angel for herself alone, and none of our filthy lucre; which was vera" (with emphasis) "uncivil: people are a good deal more filthy without it. So then my troubles began; and a weary time I had. At first your poor sister heard reason a bit, and I took her on to Switzerland and down to the Italian lakes, and wherever we went my gentleman turned up, with his long hair and his fiddle. So I came on to Paris, thinking that would be more than he could manage; but no! the day before yesterday I had had a hard morning's shopping at the Louvre, and when I came into our little sitting-room at the *pension* whom should I find but Mr. Hargrave, his tongue going like the clapper of a mill, and that silly bairnie Effie gazing at him, her two eyes just shining as if the sun was behind them. As soon as I opened my mouth to speak, she cries, 'Oh, mother dear, don't be angry, but I have promised to be his wife!' 'That you'll never be,' said I, very resolute. 'You shall

come away to your brother: maybe you'll hear reason from him.' And here we are."

"It's all a confounded nuisance," said Norman, "but I am sorry for Effie. I don't fancy she has had much experience in love-affairs. And if she believes in the fellow, why, you and I will seem hard-hearted brutes to her. What do you want me to do?"

"Why, as her natural guardian, write to this man and forbid him the house. Tell him——"

"But don't you think it would be fairer to hear what he and Effie have to say for themselves first?"

"Oh, if you are going to play fast-and-loose in that fashion my poor girl will be coaxed away, and there will be no end of troubles. You surely wouldn't like your sister to be joined to a Papist, and a Papist not worth a bawbee into the bargain?"

"Ay, there's the rub, really," he returned, laughing. "A Papist with property might be worth bringing into the true fold."

"Well, Norman, I thought you had more respect for your mother than to use such expressions."

"A thousand apologies! I know you are a sincere, good woman; but circumstances are omnipotent. Believe me, I am as averse as you can be to a half-Italian, long-haired, fiddling brother-in-law, but I must hear Effie before I can offer advice or take any line of conduct. I am sorry for her. I wish it had been some honest Britisher. It's a hard trial when a love-affair goes wrong,—especially to a woman."

"Goodness' sake, Norman, my man, don't talk like that: it seems as if you too were making a fool of yourself about some love-nonsense."

"Of course I am, mother. I should feel quite uncomfortable and out of the common if I were not in love with some one. You know that," said Adair, laughing. "But I am not going to present you with a daughter-in-law just yet."

"Ah, my dear son, may you be guided in your choice, and not carried away by mere outward seeming!"

"Amen, mother. Now you look weary and sleepy; I'll leave you; but to-morrow I'll come over early and have a talk with Effie; then we'll decide what's best to be done. And, remember, I am really on your side; only we mustn't be harsh."

A note awaited Adair when he reached his rooms:

"My sincerest congratulations, dear Norman," it said. "It will be so delightful for you to have your mother and sister with you. Of course you will be quite taken up with them. Let me know where they are to be found. If agreeable to your mother, I should like to call on her. I fancy that in the old days I was not exactly first favorite with her. Now I want to make her like me. Send me a few hints. Baby is much better,—at least the doctor says so,—but the poor little darling is still restless and suffering. Come and see him when you can: for the present, of course, you belong to your mother. I wonder if Effie remembers me,—that is, her old love for me?

"Yours very truly,

"CONSTANCE C."

Adair read this over slowly more than once. How like her writing was to herself,—clear, firm, yet graceful! Everything about her was intensely womanly. How full and soft the tones of her voice were! He could hear them speaking the words which his eyes were perusing. It would be delightful if friendship were to spring up between Constance and his womankind. What a help, what a support, his mother might be to Mrs. Crichton if she proved sympathetic! It was a tremendous “if,” however. Some unaccountable prescience seemed to tell Adair that this ardent hope would never be fulfilled. His feeling for all that in any way touched the queen of his soul was too deep, too keen, not to bestow a measure of second-sight as regarded what concerned her.

He wrote a few lines thanking Constance for her note and gratefully accepting her offer of a visit to his mother.

The next morning was occupied by a long and tearful interview with his sister, whose version of the trouble was very different from the one which he had heard from his mother.

Poor Effie was deeply touched by her brother's tenderness and consideration, though she perceived that he was strongly averse to such an impecunious marriage.

It was finally agreed that her lover should write his proposal and a statement of his financial condition and prospects, and Adair promised to take as favorable a view of matters as common sense would permit. The romantic young lassie was greatly cheered, and ran blithely to her room to indite a small volume to her *fiancé*.

Adair was very attentive to his mother during the first days of her stay, escorting her to her solicitor's and stockbroker's offices, and taking her to the few “sights” she wished to see.

The evening but one after their arrival in London Mrs. Adair and Effie dined with Norman at his chambers, a festivity which greatly pleased and excited the former. To be a guest in her son's abode greatly amused the shrewd Scotchwoman.

“Eh!” she exclaimed, “you have a fine set-out here, and I'm thinking *your* housekeeping would keep a family.”

“Oh, I am a strict economist, I assure you. I rarely dine at home.”

“Then your cook seems well experienced, for all that.”

“Oh, so she or he is,” said Adair, smiling, the banquet, of course, having been sent in from a restaurant.

“Oh, Norman,” exclaimed Effie, “we had a visit from Mrs. Crichton to-day. How handsome and sweet she is! I should never have known her. She used not to be such an elegant creature, as well as I remember.”

“Fine feathers make fine birds,” remarked her mother. “Constance Hill seems to have done well for herself in the way of marriage. She is a wee airified; not but that she is very civil and soft-spoken.”

“Oh, she is a capital woman, quite devoted to her home and the children and all that. The youngsters are such jolly little things, especially the girl, with lovely eyes just like her mother's,—a thorough little flirt,—has made up her mind to marry me.”

“H’m!” murmured Mrs. Adair, helping herself to a little more mayonnaise. “I hope she is kept in her place. The way people spoil their bairns nowadays is just fearful.”

“Oh, these little creatures are patterns of discipline, obedience, and all the rest of it,” cried Adair.

“I am glad to hear it. It seems to me you are very intimate with our old acquaintance. I wonder you did not speak more of her in your letters.”

“But I did. I told you of our meeting at a dinner-party, and of staying with them in the country, and——”

“I know; but you did not say that you were just like a brother in the house.”

“Yes, of course. It was very nice to have Effie’s place supplied when she was galivanting about with fascinating musicians,” returned Adair, lightly. He perceived that for some inscrutable reason his mother had not taken to Mrs. Crichton, and therefore decided to say as little as possible on the subject.

“I must say she is very polite. She has invited us to dinner on Tuesday first, as she wishes to introduce her husband to me. I’m glad to hear she manages her children well, for I remember she was a bit flighty and too ready with her tongue long ago. She talks fast even now. She said you were quite a comfort to her,—which was not a wise-like speech for a young married woman.”

“Not so very young, mother,” remarked Effie. “She is as old as Norman.”

“She is nearly two years younger,” returned her brother.

“And that’s old enough for discretion,” said Mrs. Adair, gravely.

Her son changed the subject by proposing a visit to the theatre on the following night, and Mrs. Crichton was not again mentioned.

As he anticipated, an invitation to dinner at Sutherland Gardens reached Adair that evening. A line at the end said, “If you are free, come to luncheon to-morrow,”—on reading which he breathed a prayer that the letter from Hargrave which Effie so eagerly expected would not arrive next morning and compel him to pass it with his sister.

His wish was fulfilled, and one o’clock found him in the presence he longed for.

“It is five days since we have seen you, Norman,” exclaimed Mrs. Crichton, greeting him with frank pleasure when he entered: she was busy with some flowers just arrived from the country. “I cannot shake hands with you: my fingers are wet. I want to put all these into water as soon as possible.”

How sweet and home-like the room was! how well and bright she looked! Yes, she had bloomed into greater beauty since the day he had been able to set her free,—free from the haunting terror which was undermining her life, and which she had borne so marvellously. Ah, what a blessed thing money and the power it gave was, sometimes!

“This box from our summer quarters is a treasure trove of beauty. If I were rich I should spend a great deal on flowers; but no flowers are so enchanting as the flowers you rear yourself. I should deeply

enjoy a garden. It is such a healthy joy for children, too," standing back a little to contemplate a large china bowl she had just filled, and drying her hands on a duster.

"I believe that you view everything in heaven and earth only as it affects the children!" exclaimed Adair, with an unconscious feeling of jealousy towards those young people.

She laughed. "I am afraid that is exactly what I do not do, Norman. When I sit over my work, I do not think of them as much perhaps as a mother ought."

"Of whom do you think, then?" he asked, drawing a chair to the table on which the flowers lay, that he might watch her at his ease. "Mr. Crichton?"

"Oh, yes, I used to think of him continually; but you delivered me from that, dear Norman. I wonder if you know the enormous deliverance you wrought for me?"

Adair did not answer immediately: he was gazing at her long, white fingers, which were deftly piling up the debris of stalks and leaves previous to ringing for their removal.

"Then you don't think so much of Crichton now?" he said, slowly.

"No. You see, I have not so much reason to fear him; but I pity him often. He is not happy, though he is so determined to have everything he likes."

"H'm! pity is akin to love."

"I hope so," she returned, with a sigh.

"You forget all this time," said Adair, "that you haven't shaken hands with me."

"Ah, yes," giving him her hand. He held it firmly.

"Do you know I am a bit of a chiromancer? Let me tell your fortune. I learned the art from an old witch of Thessaly at Port Said."

"Ah, yes, tell me. I am very curious about the future."

"Let me see," bending her hand back and pretending to read the pink palm. "Ah, the line of life has been almost severed by some great blow or trial; but it is past,—though there are trials to come. You have a dangerous enemy, whom you cannot baffle unassisted: so a good fairy godmother has sent you a devoted friend, to whom you must turn in every moment of difficulty."

"Norman, you are a transparent impostor!" she exclaimed, laughing, yet coloring and trying to draw her hand away.

"No, no! I haven't told you half. A little later," he went on, holding her hand in a grasp she could not loosen, "you will be called on to make an important decision, on which your future will depend."

"And how shall I decide?" she asked, trying to laugh the seriousness of his manner away.

"Well and wisely," said Adair, suddenly releasing her hand, "though with some tears of compassion for another's suffering."

"Really, Norman, these mystic pretensions do not suit you at all," cried Mrs. Crichton, as the servant entered to clear away the remains of the flowers. "You have far too honest a face to put on such airs successfully."

Here the two elder children came running in to hug and kiss their favorite playfellow, and then they went to luncheon.

It was always a pleasant, cheery meal, though the children needed attention and repression; but there was something so confidential and familiar about the informal meal as to make Adair feel that he was indeed one with the woman he loved so well and her children.

It was all very wrong and wicked, but that was his fault, his sin only. He was ready to pay the price: he was strong enough never to offend Constance, and for the rest he could suffer alone.

"I had quite a long chat with your mother, Norman," said Mrs. Crichton, when the children were carried off for their afternoon walk and their mother with her guest had returned to her morning room. "She is a very interesting person. How it carried me back to old times to hear her speak! I remember her voice so well. She is much more Scotch than you are, Norman."

"You see, I was brought up almost altogether in England."

"Yes. You are younger than your sister, are you not?"

"I am."

"She looks ill, as if she had been crying bitterly."

"I am afraid she is rather miserable, poor girl," returned Adair; and he proceeded to give Mrs. Crichton the Hargrave history: it had become quite natural for him to tell her everything.

Mrs. Crichton looked very grave. "It does not sound a promising affair, Norman. I prefer foreigners who are purely foreign to these continentalized Englishmen; and then, unless a musician is a genius, and an acknowledged genius, it is quite an inferior position. You must persuade her to give it up."

"I suppose so," said Adair. "But it is rather hard. I don't fancy she has ever had the ghost of a lover before. Life without love is very dreary."

"Oh, some kind of love one must have, but I am not sure that life is not more truly and peacefully happy without the love of lovers."

"That sometimes brings plenty of pain, I dare say; but it is worth all it costs. At least I fancy so," he added, checking himself.

Mrs. Crichton did not look up from her needle-work. She sighed softly, and said, in a reflective tone, "How awfully anxious I shall be when the time comes for my precious Winnie to be sought in marriage!" There was a pause; then she startled Adair by saying, as if to herself, "I should like her to marry some one like you, Norman: you seem to me so good and true."

"Thank you; you pay me the highest compliment possible," replied Adair, his brown cheek flushing a deep red. "Shall I wait for your dainty daughter?"

"Oh, no," she returned. "I hope you will be happily settled with a sweet sympathetic companion long before poor Winnie is called upon to face the dangers and difficulties of that most momentous choice, the choice of a husband. What a long, long way to look forward to! What may not happen before!"

"I never look far ahead: the present is all-sufficient for me," said Adair, in a low tone, and keeping his eyes on the carpet.

"Ah, Norman, your present is very good, I am glad to think, but you must think of your future,—your career, I mean."

"Yes, I know you want to send me off to sea; but I am not going yet, even to please you."

"No doubt you will do as you choose. But are you coming to dinner on Tuesday?"

"Most certainly."

"Then let us go round and see my sister."

"By all means."

CHAPTER VII.

THE next morning's post brought bitter mortification and floods of tears to poor Effie Adair.

Her lover sent a shuffling, temporizing letter to Norman, in which, with many professions of devotion and self-sacrifice, he withdrew his petition for the hand of Mr. Adair's adorable sister. He could not ask her to share his poor lot or to resign the luxuries of her exalted position; but the memory of the brief happiness enjoyed in her society would raise him to a nobler stand-point and cast a halo over his past, etc., etc., etc.

Adair read very clearly between the lines, that the highly gifted Hargrave understood from his letter that he had a man of resolution and common sense to deal with, and, moreover, that the fair Effie was entirely dependent on her brother,—a fact he probably did not believe on her mother's statement.

Of course no reasoning would induce Effie to accept this explanation. No, her beloved Ulrico was the noblest, the most disinterested of men, actuated only by the purest and highest affection for herself. He had no doubt been addressed in a hard and cruel manner by her hard and prejudiced brother, and feared to risk the anger of her family by calling on the woman he loved.

Norman at last grew tired of her folly. "Well, Effie," he said, "have it your own way. You will come round to my opinion yet. Anyway, the thing is at an end, for the fellow gives you up. I wish you would put him out of your head. I promise you that the first straight-going British gentleman you accept, I'll give you a decent 'tocher'; but I hate half-breeds." With this narrow-minded expression of opinion Adair left the room and bent his way to the City, as he took care to call on Crichton occasionally to ask his advice about investments (which he did not always follow) and to inquire into the proceedings of the "Sea-Side Villa Company." It cost him a good bit of self-control to cultivate Crichton even in a small degree; but it was well worth his while to exert it, for Crichton was jealous in a peculiar fashion. To suspect his wife of ever giving a thought to any one save himself never entered his head, nor that any man would admire her save in the most abstract manner; but that any one, male or female, should prefer her society, her conversation, her opinions, to his, was an astounding and unpardonable error. It was, then, very

essential to keep well with the master of No. 19, Sutherland Gardens, who was master of so much into the bargain.

Adair was always welcome to Crichton, who honestly loved the rich and inexperienced. He liked to pass as a man of vast knowledge in money and other matters, and, firmly believing in himself, succeeded in creating faith in others. But Adair had something of Scotch shrewdness as regarded "siller," and made much show about a small matter of trust; nevertheless it answered the purpose of the moment.

The ensuing few days were by no means pleasant ones to Mrs. Adair and her daughter. Norman wisely kept out of the way, with the horror of disagreeable scenes peculiar to his sex. There was one matter, however, concerning which he was anxious to jog his mother's memory. It would, he thought, gratify Mrs. Crichton if she called on her sister: so he opened the subject one morning when he had looked in on her soon after breakfast.

"Oh, by the way, have you called on Miss Hill?"

"What! Mrs. Crichton's sister?"

"Yes."

"Well, no: I didn't think of it. I thought we might meet her at Sutherland Gardens to-morrow."

"My dear mother! why, she has not been across her threshold for years."

"Eh! is she that bad? Constance just shook her head about her, and said she was no better; but I did not make out she was quite a cripple. What is it?"

"Acute rheumatism, I believe."

"It's a severe discipline,—a curious dispensation; but we can't know what is good for us."

"We are generally at odds in opinion on that subject with the higher powers, I must say," said Adair, laughing.

"Don't be irreverent, my son. Well, I have a brougham for the afternoon, and I'll just go over and see Mary Hill: maybe, as it's a melancholy kind of a visit, it may suit Effie. Eh, Norman, I have had a weary time! she is just off her head about that fiddler man."

"Yes, it's hard lines for her. Couldn't you go somewhere where there's a preserve of curates? Has she any tendency to go to confession? She might screw some comfort, and maybe a fresh lover, out of that."

"I am not pleased to hear you jeer in that way. God forbid that a child of mine should be given to those Romish practices! I wish, Norman, you would cultivate a soberer spirit."

"All right, mother: I'll behave better in future. Where is Effie?"

"Oh, in her room, writing poetry into a book."

"What! have her troubles turned her poetical?"

"Hoot toot! no. She is writing it out of one book into another."

"Why the deuce doesn't she buy the poems she likes and keep the lot of them?"

"It's better as it is: it's more of a play. I am glad to say she is a trifle brighter, though, ever since she called on Mrs. Crichton. I

was too busy, and I didn't like her visit to be left unreturned, so I just sent Effie in a cab to Sutherland Gardens. She said Mrs. Crichton was a sweet, sympathetic woman when she came back."

"Ah, I dare say she gave her some good advice, if Effie confided in her at all. Mrs. Crichton is a very sensible woman."

"More likely she talked a lot of sentimental rubbish. Good advice is never considered sympathetic."

"Perhaps you are right. Good-morning, mother. Don't forget to call on Mary Hill."

It had been a busy day, the Tuesday on which Mrs. Adair and her son and daughter were to dine at Sutherland Gardens. Mrs. Adair had at last decided on going to Torquay for the winter, and found that she had as much shopping to do as if her destination had been a desolate island where the resources of civilization were unknown. She was, therefore, barely punctual, and found her son already arrived.

Mrs. Adair's general aspect conveyed an idea of importance; she was impressive, too, in her manner of speech, and was, moreover, well and richly dressed. In fact, she was the style of guest Mr. Crichton delighted to honor, and he made himself agreeable accordingly.

Miss Adair was rather cool and stiff to her brother, but looked better and brighter; while he greeted her with kindly warmth.

"It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to my house, my dear Mrs. Adair," said Mr. Crichton, in his best manner, "both as an old friend of my wife's and as the mother of my young friend here, whom we find a great acquisition, I assure you. You see the children take quite possession of him," waving his hand towards Norman, on whose knee Winnie was contentedly perched.

"And sweet wee bairns they are," ejaculated his guest.

"Come and speak to the lady, Winnie," said her father.

Winnie looked with some awe at Mrs. Adair, and hesitated.

"Do you hear me?" he exclaimed, sternly.

Winnie slipped from Norman's encircling arm and came up with outstretched hand, her eyes fixed on Crichton.

"And what's your name, my lammie?" asked Mrs. Adair, smiling on her.

"Winnie," said the child, and turned away.

"Stop!" cried her father. "Don't run off, like a little savage, the moment you have spoken.—I'm afraid, Mrs. Adair, there is very little discipline in my house. Mrs. Crichton is too soft-hearted with her children,—lets them do as they like."

"You are soft-hearted yourself, George," said his wife, pleasantly.

"Oh, I am fond enough of them, but I don't spoil them: there's the difference.—Here, Georgie."

The boy was absorbed in a picture-book at the other end of the room, and did not hear. Crichton frowned, and repeated his call, but without raising his voice. Still no answer. A third time he called, now in stentorian tones. The boy started, and came quickly.

"Why did you not come at once, sir?"

"Did you call before?" returned Georgie.

"That's rather a clever dodge," said his father, laughing harshly, "but it won't do, my boy. Be off to your bed, for disobedience and deceit!"

"But, papa, I did *not* hear; indeed I did not."

"I'll be bound you'll hear another time. Off with you!"

"I am sure he did not hear," put in Mrs. Crichton, who had flushed up and then turned very white.

"Oh, I'll cure his deafness," cried his father. "Go, sir!"

The child's eyes filled with tears. His mother went over to him, and said, gently, "You must obey, dear. I will explain to father."

She went with him to the door, kissed him gently, and closed it behind him.

"I am sure you managed your children well, Mrs. Adair, or you would not have sent out so good a specimen as our friend Norman here."

Adair had kept profoundly still, but his eyes had sought Mrs. Crichton's, and they exchanged a glance of profound sympathy.

"By Jove," he exclaimed, "there isn't a finer, better little chap anywhere than your boy, Crichton!"

"Maybe so; but——"

"Dinner is on the table," said the parlor-maid; and the brief but unpleasant episode was over.

Possibly Crichton feared he might have made a bad impression; but at dinner he was especially amiable and did the host with his most gracious air of *bonhomie*. Mrs. Adair was a somewhat profuse talker in a slow and pertinacious fashion, and her host listened as if to dropping pearls of wit and wisdom; he was complimentary to Effie and cordial to Norman; but he took little or no notice of his wife, who was rather silent and preoccupied, her heart aching for her boy, whom she pictured sobbing in his bed, his little heart aching and burning with a sense of wrong and injustice.

By a gallant effort Adair forced himself to take part in the conversation and cover the unusual quiet of his hostess.

"I was very pleased to see your sister Mary yesterday," said Mrs. Adair. "She is changed a good bit; but, as I was saying to her, most things are mixed with mercy, and at least she seems to have every needful comfort, which is something to be thankful for."

"I am so much obliged to you for calling on her. I have not seen her since, but I am sure your visit was a great pleasure to her."

"Not seen her for twenty-four hours!" exclaimed Crichton. "Well, that is a wonder.—I assure you, Mrs. Adair, I don't fancy if the house was on fire, or the children at the last gasp, my wife would omit her diurnal visit to her invalid sister."

"Mr. Crichton does not often indulge in such imaginative flights. As I am a large percentage of the mercy with which her lot is mixed, I shall try to see my sister as regularly as I can," said Mrs. Crichton, gently.

"I'm sure it must be very nice to have a sister," cried Effie: "another girl would feel for you so much more than a brother. Men are hard."

"If you ask me, Miss Adair, I should say all men, even a brother, would be soft to a young lady like you," said Crichton, gallantly.

"Ah, Mr. Crichton, you little know!" returned Effie, shaking her head dolefully.

"Ah, Miss Adair, do they treat you badly? If so, come and tell your troubles to me. Your brother will show you the way to my office, and I'll see what can be done for you."

"Eh! and what will Mrs. Crichton say?" asked the young lady, coquettishly.

"Oh, she isn't jealous; nor, for that matter, am I. I have no reason. If I had, I'd make it pretty hot all round, I can tell you."

"Dear me, Mr. Crichton! I should be quite afraid of you."

"No, no; none need fear me, if they are honest and above-board; but I never would forgive deceit." And, to Adair's indignation, he glanced at his wife.

"Deceit is just intolerable, especially to the Scotch," observed Mrs. Adair, solemnly.

"Yes," rejoined her son: "at least they have a great objection to be deceived. Whether they have an equally strong objection to deceive is another question."

"Eh, Norman, you should not speak against your own: it's not patriotic."

"I am not speaking against the Scotch. My belief is that if we could get at the real truth respecting morals (and I suppose truth is included in morals) among all nations, there would not be a pin to choose between them."

"But there can be no doubt, my dearie, that religious truth was specially given to the Northern Protestants,—a precious gift."

"A very unfair one!" exclaimed Adair, smiling. "Why should the Northerners be so highly favored?"

"Take another glass of claret, Mrs. Adair," said the host.

"No, I am much obliged to you. I cannot say I like sacred topics discussed at a dinner-table."

"Shall we go up-stairs?" suggested Mrs. Crichton.

The ladies were soon followed by Adair and his host. Then Effie, on being pressed, sang some Scotch ballads in a high, shrill voice, and Mr. Crichton applauded. He said he liked songs with some spirit in them,—not things that would make you cry your eyes out.

Mrs. Adair, who was sitting by the fire, now begged Mrs. Crichton to favor them. She good-humoredly assented, choosing a sweet, sad German air with English words. She sang with simple pathos, and her voice was sweet and true.

"Thank you," said Adair, in a low tone, when she returned to her place.

"There's a lively tune for you!" said Crichton, contemptuously.

"Indeed it's a trifle sad," observed Mrs. Adair.

"But infinitely sweet," added her son.

"It's growing late," continued Mrs. Adair. "I think we had better be going homewards. I'll trouble your people to call a cab."

"What's your hurry, Mrs. Adair?" asked Crichton. "You must

take a little whiskey and soda before you go. I can promise you the whiskey is real Scotch."

"No, thank you: it is just the only Scotch thing I cannot abide."

"When do you go to Torquay?" asked Mrs. Crichton.

"On Thursday at latest. I want to be in time to secure good rooms; and Effie has started coughing again."

"Oh, it isn't much, mother."

In a few minutes the cab was announced and adieux were exchanged.

"It has given me great pleasure to make your acquaintance," said Mr. Crichton, offering his arm to Mrs. Adair. "I hope to see you again when you pass through town."

"Good-night, dear Mrs. Crichton," whispered Effie. "You don't know how much good you did me by your suggestion that *he* may just be waiting till he is in a better position: so I'll have faith and patience."

"I must see them to their hotel, I suppose," said Adair, in a discontented tone.

"Yes, of course you must; and please go, Norman. I am going to run away to my poor little Georgie: his heart must be nearly broken." Her voice was broken by a half-suppressed sob.

"When can I come again?" murmured Adair, catching her hand in both his own.

"Oh, not for a day or two; not till your mother has left town. I am going to be busy."

"Very well. On Friday at tea-time?"

"Yes, that will do. Go, dear Norman: they are waiting for you." She turned and ran swiftly up-stairs.

The effect of this evening was irritating to Adair. He was almost dismayed at the height to which his dislike, nay, hatred, of Crichton had risen. The dominance of such a passion was sure to darken his judgment and weaken his power of befriending Constance. He must fight against its growth. The man was growing more and more odious. Was his selfish greed undermining or unsettling his mental balance? If so, the consequences to wife and children were incalculable, and the necessity for his presence in England was stronger than ever. How would it all end? Well, all he could do was to live from day to day and meet emergencies as they arose.

Adair hardly saw his mother in the time which intervened between the Crichton dinner and her departure for Torquay. The evening before she started she was again her son's guest in his rooms, and then found an opportunity before her daughter's arrival (as that young lady had prolonged her shopping) to confide her fears to Norman,—fears that Effie had surreptitiously sent a letter to "that fiddler man,"—"for I found her crying and blowing her nose over a sheet of foreign note-paper," continued Mrs. Adair, "and I am not that sure of Jenkins, our maid: she is a prudent, careful woman, but too fond of the siller: she'd post a letter to the deil for half a crown."

Before Norman could console her, Effie appeared, and their private confab was over.

It was rather a pleasant little dinner. Adair himself was in good spirits. Indeed, he was half ashamed of the relief his mother's and sister's approaching departure afforded him. His feeling for them was kind and warm, but he had not before realized that they were an embodiment of Mrs. Grundyism and disposed to take the narrowest possible view of any by-path diverging from the beaten track, and—in fact, were in the way.

"And you'll come down and see us now and again, Norman?" said his mother, as the "good-night" time drew near. "Eh, Effie, it will be nice and home-like to have him coming down from Saturday to Monday.—And you'll stay with us at the new year?"

"Of course, mother dear. I shall be delighted."

"You must mind and tell Mrs. Crichton that I am very sorry I could not call before leaving. She is a lucky woman to have met with such a sensible, wise-like husband as she has. He's just a sound, far-seeing man."

"Oh, yes, he is all right, with an eye to the main chance and a strong determination to have his own way."

"And a very good way it is, Norman. I can't say I think *her* quite the angel you do."

"Eh, mother, she is a sweet woman," cried Effie.

"Sweet or not, she was foolish to back up her bairn against his father."

"I thought she exercised wonderful self-control when Crichton spoke so brutally and stupidly to the poor little chap," cried Adair, incautiously.

"Just you take care, Norman, my man. A fair face oughtn't to make up for everything, nor long soft looks asking for compassion, neither. You just be honest, and do justice to the husband as well as to the handsome wife."

"Good God, mother! what are you talking about?" exclaimed Adair, flushing red even to his brow.

"What it is my duty to warn you against, my son." This with a solemn shake of the head.

Her words struck him with a sudden terror. What, was he—and, still more, was *she* so unguarded as to betray themselves to a countrified old lady like his mother? And had Constance anything to betray? But he must not treat her observations seriously. "'Evil be to him'—or her—who evil thinks," he said, with a forced laugh. "I think you may leave Mrs. Crichton to take care of herself, and of me too, for that matter. What! going already?"

"Well, it's close on ten o'clock, and there's something in the London air that just weighs me down."

"What hour does your train go to-morrow?"

"Twelve-fifteen."

"Well, I'll be there. And let me have a line to say how you got down.—Cheer up, Effie. It makes me miserable to see you look so."

Effie gave him a hearty kiss in token of forgiveness, and mother and daughter drove off to their hotel.

His mother's shrewd remarks gave Adair food for thought, and

showed him, as if by a flash of lightning, how weak honor, principle, conscience, would prove as bulwarks against the rising tide of passion if he caught a glimpse of a response in Constance Crichton's clear, calm eyes. But he believed (and tried to thank God for the belief) that she had no love save for her children,—only a kindly sense of gratitude towards himself. The faint recognition of his feeling for her which she had shown when telling him of her troubles at their summer abode seemed to have passed away and been forgotten. Her manner to him since his return to town was as frank, as confidential, as unembarrassed, as at the first. "It must never be disturbed," was his firm conclusion.

His mother gone, the rest of the day hung heavy on Adair's hands. Town and the club were still empty, at least of his acquaintances. Still, he was proof against the temptation to run up to Sutherland Gardens to report his mother's departure. No, he would wait till to-morrow, as he had promised. So he wandered into a Regent Street toy-shop, and laid in some offerings for his little chums. "It is quite an age since I gave them anything," he thought. Then he went to see a new piece at the Princess's, was dreadfully bored, and came away reflecting on the tameness of dramatic passion compared to the tremendous force of reality.

Friday was a crisp, russet October day, and Adair walked across the parks to Sutherland Gardens and arrived a little before luncheon-time, to receive an uproarious welcome from the children, who had scattered the cargo of toys he had despatched to them the day before all over their mother's morning room. She soon joined them, and thanked him more eloquently with her eyes than with her lips for his thought of her dear ones.

They were rather noisy at luncheon, and eager to take some of their new treasures to a neighboring square and display them to their playmates. After their departure Mrs. Crichton proceeded to put her room in order, with Adair's help.

"Mr. Crichton has gone to Gravesend in a new steamer belonging to one of his acquaintances. There is to be a gay party on board. I don't suppose he will be back till midnight," she said, after a while.

"Indeed! Then suppose you come with me to the Strand. There's a pretty musical piece on there. You never seem to go anywhere. I don't suppose Crichton would mind," cried Adair, eagerly.

"Very likely not. But, Norman, I always think my few free evenings belong to my poor Mary. Life is so sad. It is too selfish to deprive her of anything I can give."

"Do you ever think of yourself in any way?"

"Oh, yes! don't fancy me a dreadful piece of perfection."

"No, I don't. May I not come and have dinner, or tea, or whatever it is?"

"Yes, certainly. Why not?"

"All right. I have to meet a man at the club about six: then I'll come back to Myrtle Grove."

Their talk flowed on about some books Miss Hill had been interested in, and after a short pause Mrs. Crichton said,—

"You will miss your mother and sister, Norman."

"Yes. My mother is not looking very well."

"Mr. Crichton was quite charmed with her; they seemed very sympathetic. But, somehow, I don't think she liked me. Do you know, I feel a little afraid of her."

"She is a little severe; but she has been a capital mother."

"Ah, she is strong. How fortunate for herself! I could see she thought I spoiled my boy. Poor, dear Georgie! I saw *you* felt for him, Norman."

"I did, with all my heart. I'd have given anything to have brought him back and comforted—that is, put him into your arms, which must mean comfort."

"I don't know how I bore it. It was one of my bitter moments. He is growing so capricious with the children. What a bad effect it will have on them! How helpless they are! How helpless *I* am! But I must not lose courage: it is all I have between me and despair."

"Yes. Hold on to it, for God's sake. But how—how will it all end?"

"Do not ask that, Norman: I dare not. I live only from day to day. I never think of next week."

"Nor I. What is life to me, except so far as it can be of use to you?"

The words were past his lips before he could pull up, and he stood still, with a sudden sense of guilt and self-betrayal.

The color mounted slowly in Mrs. Crichton's cheek, and her face grew grave, but her voice was calm and steady as she said,—

"Norman, you must neither speak nor think in this strain. Beyond an occasional passing help, you can do nothing for me: more would turn the balance from usefulness to harm. Oh, I am not ungrateful. You rescued me from what I dare not think of; and, oh, if I am in a sore strait I will come to you. It is the only support I have,—the knowledge that you can and will befriend me. But, Norman, do not give me too much,—not what I can never repay or return. I want you to be happy." Her voice broke.

"I want nothing; I ask nothing. Forget any folly I may have uttered. Use me as you will."

She stretched out her hand, which he clasped and ventured to kiss for the first time. "We will meet at your sister's," he said, and left the room.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE days which immediately followed this interview were embittered to Adair by self-reproach. He dreaded the effect of his self-betrayal; for it was impossible that Mrs. Crichton could mistake the nature of his devotion. Suppose she took fright and withdrew her quiet confidence? he could never forgive himself. He had not the courage to call on her, though burning to see her again. In this restless frame of mind he was delighted to receive the following note:

"I wish you would look in here to-day or to-morrow. I am not quite satisfied about the Sea-Side Villa Company. We think of calling a meeting of share-holders. I want to explain one or two points.

"Yours truly,

"G. CRICHTON."

It was dated from his office, and reached Adair early in the afternoon. With a vague hope that this interview would lead to the drawing closer of the links which he feared had been loosened, he started for the City at once. "He will be sure to ask me to dinner," he pondered, as he drove along, "and I'll go. I shall soon see how the land lies."

Occupied with his own thoughts, he did not heed the crowded streets through which he drove, and it seemed only a few minutes after he got into the hansom before it stopped. The driver lifted the trap, and said,—

"Can't get no further, sir; there's been a haccident, and the street is blocked."

"All right: I'll walk," returned Adair, who paid the man and jumped out.

There was a confusion of men and horses in the street, in the midst of which the helmets of several policemen could be descried, and Adair was naturally attracted.

"What has happened?" he asked a respectable-looking man who had also paused to look on.

"Bad accident, sir. Gentleman was crossing, and a mail-cart came by full tilt; the shaft caught his shoulder and hurled him under that big wagon. The wheel has gone right over his middle.—Stay, here they come." And the crowd parted to permit the passage of a stretcher, carried by two policemen, on which lay a covered burden.

"Where are they taking the poor fellow?" asked Adair.

"To the station, close by. The doctor isn't sure whether there's life in him or not," returned a man who had been in the middle of the crowd. "You see the streets are slippery, especially on the slope here" (it was in Canon Street), "and the carter couldn't pull up."

Urged by a vague curiosity, Adair followed, managing to get near the stretcher, round which the crowd pressed so closely that the cloth which concealed the injured man was disarranged and the face displayed, —only for a moment, but that moment sufficed to strike Adair motionless, silent, powerless, as he recognized Crichton.

The crowd moved on, jostling and nearly overturning the stunned, stupefied individual whose idle curiosity was now so strangely satisfied. For a minute or two he could not think,—he could hardly see; but he rallied quickly, and bent his steps to the station, where he sent in his card to the inspector with a pencilled line to say that he could identify the sufferer.

After what seemed a long time to Adair, during which the doctor ascertained that life was extinct, he was admitted, and informed the authorities that he was well acquainted with the deceased, the contents of whose pocket-book corroborated his statements. He therefore undertook the painful task of breaking the death-tidings to the family.

Within an hour from the time he set out for the City he was speeding westward with his momentous intelligence. He felt still dazed, but his ideas were growing clearer. What an extraordinary change had a few minutes wrought in the present and future of the woman who was so dear to him! She was free. Never again would she tremble before the despot who was her inferior. Had he executed his new will? No matter. He (Adair) had, thank heaven, enough and to spare,—enough to make her a happy tranquil home which should atone for and obliterate the past, if (what a tremendous if!) she could be won to think of him as a partner for life. Certainly, so far, even had Adair been the most self-conceited of men, he could not flatter himself that she regarded him as anything more than a kind and useful friend. Still, he could not help hoping. Was it not selfish and heartless to think in this strain, when he had scarcely escaped from the presence of death? He did not know; he did not care. How slowly the man drove! how blocked the streets were with traffic! At last, at last, he reached the well-known door.

"Is Mrs. Crichton at home?"

"No, sir," returned the servant, startled out of her well-bred impassibility by his disturbed looks. "She has been out some time. Won't you walk in and sit down?"

"Thank you. Perhaps Mrs. Crichton is at her sister's: pray send round there and say I am anxious to see her."

"Very well, sir."

It seemed to Adair that he paced the dining-room for ages before the maid returned to say that her mistress was not with Miss Hill. How much longer should he have to wait? Even while he thought this, the door-bell sounded, and Mrs. Crichton entered, a slightly startled look in her eyes. On meeting him, she stopped short.

"Norman!" she exclaimed. "What is it?"

"I am sorry to tell you," he began, hurriedly, "that Mr. Crichton has met with a—a—serious accident."

"How? Where?" she exclaimed. "Is he very badly hurt? Does he suffer much? I must go to him at once."

"He does not suffer at all," said Adair, in a low tone.

"Ah!" she cried, catching his arm and looking in his face, "he is dead!"

"He is dead," echoed Adair.

"Dead!" she repeated, with a little cry,—“before he knew one gleam of true pure pleasure, one touch of real love. What a lost life! Oh, I might have done more for him, had I been braver and stronger.” She grew so white that Adair thought she was going to faint, and hastily drew forward a chair, into which she sank. “Tell me all. My brain seems dulled and still,” she said.

Adair's story was brief, but she did not seem to take it in. The shock was too great. She stretched out her hands with something of the pathetic helplessness of the blind as she rose and moved towards the door, as if not quite conscious.

Adair was alarmed, and rang for the servants, to whom he hastily told the tidings of their master's death. Then Nurse took charge of

her mistress. "She is fairly overdone, even without this shock," she said. "If you'll tell cook, who is a steady, sensible woman, she'll have things ready and send for the doctor: he lives close by. I will not leave my mistress."

Adair looked wistfully after Mrs. Crichton, but she did not seem to see him, and soon he found ample employment, as every one applied to him for directions and suggestions, until the doctor, who was also a personal friend of Mrs. Crichton's, came to share his responsibilities, and he escaped to tell the particulars of the fatal accident to Miss Hill.

The days which immediately ensued were fully occupied with the preparations for the ceremonies and business which death necessitates.

Adair had not seen Mrs. Crichton since the day on which he had brought her the tidings of her widowhood. She had sent the little ones away with their nurse out of the house of mourning, and had for a companion and guest a lady who was a distant cousin of Mr. Crichton's, the wife of a well-off manufacturer in Leeds, the only member of his family he had ever acknowledged.

The widow was a striking and stately figure in her trailing garments of deepest black as she received the funeral guests with a composed and reverent air, but Adair had few opportunities of speaking to her. He felt how her hand trembled as he held it, and whispered a petition to be allowed to call upon her soon.

"I will write to you, my dear good friend," she replied. "At present I have scarcely an hour I can call my own."

Already he noticed that the guarded inscrutable look had gone from her eyes,—they were franker, softer; and he thanked God that the shadow had been lifted from her life.

After the funeral Mrs. Crichton went to her room. Most of the guests dispersed at the cemetery, but Adair and the lawyer returned to the house, where the latter spoke for a few minutes to the widow, then he and Adair walked away together.

"After all," said the lawyer, "that accident was, on the whole, a stroke of luck for Mrs. Crichton. Her husband had made a very unjust will. He had appointed a man she objected to, and another, a stranger to her and a busy M.P., executors to his will and guardians to his children, and bequeathed her a pittance of only two hundred and fifty a year. He was a very wrong-headed man, very,—especially of late. I have sometimes doubted his complete sanity. I suspect his wife had a deuced hard time of it. Crichton was on his way to my office to execute this last will and testament (which I assure you I fought against as long as I could) when he met with his death."

"I trust Mrs. Crichton will have peace for the rest of her life," returned Adair.

"Well, yes, I hope so. But it is more than I expect. She is an uncommon handsome, charming woman, and before a couple of years are over some smart fellow on the lookout for money will snap her up. No amount of matrimonial misery warns a widow off the line. Well, I must say good-day: this is my 'bus."

It was more than a week before Mrs. Crichton wrote to Adair;

then she appointed the next day but one for his visit, and concluded, "I still feel strange and bewildered, but the children are with me again, and I am a little more like myself."

Adair could not settle to any occupation, so eager and feverish were his anticipations of the approaching interview. Nevertheless, he schooled himself rigidly to maintain the kindly calmness of an old friend in voice and look and manner when he again looked into the eyes he loved so well and heard the voice which gave a charm to everything it uttered.

The morning of the day appointed by Mrs. Crichton, just as Adair was starting for Sutherland Gardens a telegram was put into his hand. It was from his sister, announcing the sudden seizure by paralysis of his mother, and begging him to come to them at once. There were many matters to arrange in the next few hours, but first he would see Constance and show her the telegram.

Mrs. Crichton received him with grave, gentle composure, and sympathized warmly in his distress respecting his mother. "You must not waste time here, Norman, when you have so much to do. As to myself, I have nothing decided to tell you. I can make no plans until I know exactly how I stand; and I believe our affairs are rather complicated in consequence of Mr. Crichton's connection with various companies. But you will write to me about your mother? and I will keep you informed of my movements."

"Yes, I must not stay. Thank heaven, I do not fear to leave you now!" exclaimed Adair. "Even if I am obliged to take my mother abroad, you are safe and free: no harm can come to you."

"Let us forget the past, Norman," she returned, with a slight increase of color: "I wish to bury it in my unfortunate husband's grave; for he *was* unfortunate, to be color-blind to the true aspects of life."

"You promise to write to me, then?" urged Adair, taking her hand, and looking long and wistfully into her eyes.

"I shall be glad to write to and hear from you: let me know directly how you find your mother. Good-by, dear Norman, good-by, and God bless you!"

He kissed her hand, and was gone.

Mrs. Adair's illness proved to be long and critical, and her recovery exceedingly slow. When able to be moved, she was advised to try the south of Italy during the remainder of the winter and early spring. Norman could not leave to his sister the task of conveying the fragile invalid such a distance unaided, and therefore took charge of the party, much to the delight of mother and daughter. In truth, he was not anxious to return to England immediately. He knew that Mrs. Crichton was safe and well; she wrote regularly, if not frequently, sometimes to him, sometimes to his sister, with whom she had renewed her intercourse, and he felt that if he were often with her, drinking in the delight of her presence, he could hardly hold back the avowal of his profound love for her, hardly resist the passionate pleading for a promise of future union; and this would, he knew, offend her. And

thus the months rolled past hopefully, tolerably, and early spring had come round again when Adair permitted himself to return to London.

How delightfully familiar it seemed to him as he issued from his hotel the morning after his arrival! The interval since he left had been a period of stagnation, an emotional blank, and it slipped from his memory like water over a smooth decline. Was it yesterday or a year ago since he hailed the Kilburn omnibus and on that most prosaic conveyance drove away to meet his fate? A whole year ago,—the most inactive year of his life,—the one, the only one, which could never be forgotten. Even though he ventured to hope for a happy future, still, happiness does not write its mark upon the soul like the fever and pain and unrest of a mental struggle. He hoped, chiefly because he dared not despair. After all, why should Constance refuse him? Of course she was too good, too fine a creature for him; but she knew him well, and trusted him,—ay, and liked him in a certain way. So, even without loving him as he loved her, she might be disposed to let him share her life as a tender sympathetic friend who would care for her children as if they were his own, and be a real helpmeet. "Of course I shall feel my way and be very prudent," thought Adair, as he rang the door-bell, and tried to keep himself cool and composed, though his heart was beating hard and his pulses were throbbing.

A strange servant opened the door,—a trifle which struck Adair as an evil omen.

"Mrs. Crichton was at home: would he walk in?"

He did, and was ushered up to the dreary drawing-room, dreary now no longer. A bright fire burned in the grate, books and work lay around; but in the back room was a large packing-case, and a variety of ornamental articles lay about it. Evidently some change was in progress. But he had no time to conjecture further, for Mrs. Crichton came in quickly, with both hands outstretched.

"My dear Norman! This is delightful! I had no idea you would be here so soon."

"Soon! It seems to me infinite ages since I saw you."

He stood holding her hands and gazing in delight at the radiant health, the serene content, that beamed in her fair face. She had evidently flushed with pleasure at seeing him, for the brilliant color faded somewhat as they exchanged inquiries and then sat down for a long talk.

"And your mother will return in June? How pleased I shall be to see her! You know, Norman, I used to be a little afraid of her: she was very stately."

"She is very fragile now. I fear I must give up the project of settling her in Scotland, though she would like it: she could not stand the climate."

Here a pause occurred. Adair found it harder and harder to preserve the calm, friendly tone he had prescribed for himself. Loving, passionate words sprang to his lips; and then he knew he could not keep his eyes silent while he tried to regain self-control.

Mrs. Crichton rose, and, crossing the room to a writing-table on

which lay letters and papers, unlocked a drawer and took out a thick envelope. "There, Norman," she said, placing it in his hand, "at last I am able to pay the kindest creditor any one ever had,—at least all that can be paid, which is but little. From the full obligation I never wish to be relieved."

"But, Mrs. Crichton—Constance, I do not want this."

"No, perhaps; but you will find some other poor wretch to help. There, put it away; and none can ever know how you helped me in my sorest need."

Adair had too much delicacy to refuse, but the little incident seemed for a moment to raise up a barrier between them; his impulse to avow his feelings for her was checked, and while he hesitated she went on to speak of the children.

"You know," added Mrs. Crichton, "that I have had my poor Mary with me all the winter. We shall never part again. She is a new creature, as you will see; though she suffers at times. I have also told you that we shall not be so well off as I at first expected; but I have quite enough, and we have just succeeded in getting rid of the lease of this house: you see I am beginning to pack up."

"And where are you going?"

"I am in treaty for a sweet old house with a big lawn and garden near W—, on the Epsom and Leatherhead Line. I do hope I shall get it: my darlings will blossom like roses in the delightful air; and it is scarcely half an hour from town, so you can run down and see us, Norman, when you are ashore; for I suppose you *will* go to sea?"

A thrill of cold despair shivered through him. What did all these plans mean, in which he could take no part? Prudence, caution, all went by the board: he must grasp this lovely, lovable woman for whom his heart ached.

"But is it—is it wise to bury yourself alive in a suburban country place,—the most lonely of all places?" he exclaimed, in imploring tones. "You, at your age!—You, so suited to enjoy and charm! I don't like to hear of it. I—— Constance, for God's sake don't plan out your life without leaving room in it for me! You must know that I am devoted to you heart and soul. Let me give my existence to you and your sweet children: I love them for your sake and their own. You could trust your happiness to me, and you can take your own time. I would not ask you to do what is unbecoming. You don't know how utterly you have taken possession of me; but you must know that I love you,—have loved you almost from the first."

"Yes, Norman," she said, softly, while she grew paler, "I did fear it, even when I felt most grateful to you. You have been so true, so considerate, to respect me as you have done in spite of my cowardly want of respect for myself. But, dear old friend, I have no love to give you, not the kind of love you deserve. All I once possessed has been scathed, destroyed, by the terrible degradation of my past life. No words could express to you the loathing with which I shrink from the idea of marriage; the possibility would make me hate any man,—even *you*, for whom I have the highest regard. Ah, had you been my husband originally, I could have indeed been happy!

And you, Norman, when you know that I am safe and well and utterly content, you will throw off this affection——”

“You don’t know what you are saying!” he broke in, passionately. “My life will be wrecked. I have existed for the last six months on the hope of winning you. Don’t, Constance, don’t throw me aside. You are too young to have done with love. These painful memories will fade and existence put on its spring attire. Do not reject me without some consideration.”

“It would not be kind to you, Norman, either to hesitate or to accept you. It is impossible to put into words the horror of marriage which my married life has stamped deep into my soul. Throw yourself into your profession, and the forgetfulness you prophesy for me will come to you. Then you will meet some fair young girl whose fresh heart will be all yours, Norman,—you are a man whom any woman might love,—some creature who has never been bruised and wounded and dragged through the mire as I have been.”

“You exaggerate!” cried Adair, passionately. “But even if it were true, bruised, wounded, mire-stained, you would still be my queen.” And he held out his arms to her.

She turned from him and burst into tears. “You only grieve, you cannot change me, Norman.”

And still he pleaded, till her white cheeks, her steady distressed eyes, suddenly struck conviction into his heart, and he ceased to speak. A painful pause ensued.

“I feel my words are vain except to vex you. Constance, can you consent to lay down your youth?”

“It has left me for the present,” she said, “but it will revive again as my children grow to be companions. Their freshness will be infectious. The one boon I have prayed for during the past dreadful years has been peace. I shall have it now. I can watch over my sister and atone for the desolate past, and I can redeem the weakness and errors of early days by firmness in the care of my children. Dear Norman, had I the smallest tinge of love for you, could I have said no?”

He stood for a moment in despairing silence. Then, in a voice hoarse with emotion, he exclaimed, “It is good-by, then,—and a long good-by.”

“But not for always, Norman? When—when you are yourself again, you will be my friend?”

“Farewell!” he returned. “I will never vex you more.”

A long look, as if to learn her face by heart, and, without even attempting to touch her hand, he turned and left the house.

“Good-by, Norman,—good-by. Would to God we had met and loved before!” she murmured, bursting into a passion of tears.

THE END.

THE MOONSHINER OF FACT.

SOME three years ago, my friend Pencraft made a flying trip through Dixie. He was writing a novel at the time, in which one of the characters was a Southern colonel, and, having never been south of the Potomac, he concluded to take a week in which to familiarize himself with the type. We met on the platform of the railway station at Cartersville, Georgia; and while we were waiting for the train, Pencraft complained rather bitterly of the scarcity of types in the South.

"So far as I can see, you have no types," said he. "I've been down here five days now, and I've covered the ground pretty thoroughly from Virginia to Louisiana. In all that time I haven't met Colonel Carter, or the Major, or the Joel Chandler Harris ducky, or the Miss Murfree mountaineer."

It was certainly exasperating, considering the time spent, and, wishing to be helpful, I looked about among the groups on the platform for something typical enough to assuage Pencraft's disappointment. There was a family of country-people standing near us, and, suggesting the possibility of literary material therein, I stood aside while Pencraft made his notes. When completed, they read something like this:

"Southern types:—family Georgians. Father tall, stoop-shouldered—fifty or more—cotton shirt, brown jeans, discouraged slouch hat—stands with hands in pockets and stares hard at nothing. Mother—same type—sallow complexion, faded brown eyes, thin hair (no particular color), general aspect of dejection accented by snuff-stick in mouth. Elder daughter with unwashed baby—younger edition of old woman—has lateral curvature of spine from carrying child on left arm—stands silently, like the others, as if in rapt contemplation. (*Mem.*—Find out if Southern ruralist has subconscious esoteric leanings.) Son—awkward youth of voice-changing age—belongs to the ruminants, and is slowly surrounding himself with circle of tobacco-juice—is greatly abashed when sister gives him baby to hold while she ties ribbon on younger daughter's hair. Younger daughter—magnificent type country beauty—black hair and eyes—tinted brunette skin—black eyebrows, nearly straight—nose slightly aquiline and large enough to harmonize with firm mouth and chin. Is decked out with much care—evidently going on journey, which others have come to speed. Train arrives—silent leave-taking in which no one speaks. Black-eyed beauty kisses whole family, beginning with stoop-shouldered father. Awkward youth much disconcerted—fights when his turn comes, but is handicapped by baby. Beauty's eyes snap—her face lights up with aroused determination—is evidently not accustomed to refusals—grapples with unwilling lout—kisses him twice very forcibly—then darts up the steps into the car."

Pencraft read the sketch aloud when we had taken our seats in the Pullman, and asked for a classification of his subjects. I answered that the people were most probably Georgia mountaineers.

"Mountaineers? Not moonshiners?"

"Why, certainly. All mountaineers are moonshiners. Didn't you know that?"

"Great Scott! and you never so much as hinted at the possibility! You're no man's friend. Never mind, though: I can make a story out of nothing more than that girl's face."

He did it; and, so far as the character of the young woman was concerned, it was doubtless a true picture. Beyond the heroine, however, verisimilitude handed the pen to literary tradition. The old man became a buccaneer whose regard for human life was a minus quantity; the boy was transformed into a promising young cutthroat to whom all strangers were "revenuers" and as such to be "killed up" without compunction. And for the minor characters there was a "Jake Manders," an "Anderson" or two, and a young mountaineer whose name I forget,—all as ferocious desperadoes as one would seek to avoid in a day's journey. They were the moonshiners of fiction; and, regarded as artistic conceptions of the necessary accessories to the development of a dramatic and somewhat painful plot, they left nothing to be desired.

The following year Pencraft made himself a holiday, and spent it tramping in the mountains of East Tennessee. When he came out, I took occasion to ask if he had been gathering material for more moonshiner stories. He appeared to be somewhat disquieted at the question, and would have avoided it. When that was no longer possible, he burst out with some warmth:

"See here: what did you let me make a bally fool of myself for? You knew there were no such people as I put into that story, and yet you let me go on and write myself down an idiot along with the rest of them. Why couldn't you give me a hint?"

I said something about not wishing to interfere with the literary unities.

"Unities be hanged! I went into the mountains at Morristown with a Winchester, a revolver, and a guide, determined to sell my life at a fancy price. On the third day I sent the whole armament back to town and went on empty-handed and alone. I might have sent my money back, too, for all the use I had for it. These people are poor and ignorant and simple and primitive,—anything you like along that line,—but they're as hospitable as the Arabs, as honest as they are simple, and as harmless as unspoiled country-folk are anywhere."

"Then you didn't meet any moonshiners?"

"Didn't I? I've eaten with them, drunk with them, slept in their cabins, stood watch with them—in short, I've been a moonshiner myself for the past month. And now do you know what's going to happen? I do the 'new books' for *The Literary Junta*, and the first fellow who comes out with a fairy-tale about these people will get himself slated."

"How about 'The Moonshiner's Revenge,' by Pelton Pencraft?"

"Oh, Lord! I forgot that asinine thing. Well, I suppose that shuts me off. I can't commit hari-kari. It would be playing Samson, wouldn't it?—and I can't afford to bury myself in the ruins. Just

the same, old man, I'll owe you a grudge as long as I live; you've stood by and watched me miss the chance of a lifetime."

Among those who know him best, Pencraft has the name of being an enthusiast and an extremist; none the less, in the matter of the moonshiners he told the simple truth. He erred, however, in believing his experience with the mountaineers to be singular; it was merely that of every one who has gone among them in any character whatsoever save that of informer, spy, or "revenuer."

Not to draw too heavily upon the account of hearsay, a leaf from my own note-book will serve to illustrate further the difference between the moonshiner of the novelists and the dramatists and the illicit distiller of fact. I had been whipping the streams for reluctant trout all day up and down the gorges of the great mountain which the fathers belittled by calling it Walden's Ridge, when I stumbled unexpectedly upon a mountaineer who had doubtless been watching my progress up the rocky ravine. He was armed with the traditional rifle; his position commanded the path; and the gorge was wild enough and isolated enough to form the stage-setting for any scene of violence, however lurid and blood-curdling. According to all precedent, I should have been arrested, tried by summary process, and—if not rescued by some mountain Pocahontas—flung from the brow of a precipice, to become food for the unkindly buzzards. For the sake of the unities in literature, it is to be regretted that nothing of the kind occurred. The man nodded, gave and received the inevitable "howdy," and would have gone about his business without further speech if I had not inquired the way to a cabin whose owner was my friend's friend.

"Ol' Jeff Ande'son's?—hit's a good two hour an' more f'om the head o' this yer gulch. Was ye 'lowin' to put up over-night 'long 'ith Jeff?"

I admitted it, emphasizing the past tense; whereupon the man who—speaking after the manner of the craft—should have shot me down without ceremony, or led me captive to my undoing, invited me to pass the night under his roof. The invitation was accepted willingly enough; and, inasmuch as the man's personality and mode of life were typical, they may be taken as the part which represents the whole.

The cabin, one degree more primitive than the "two pens and a passage" of the valley farmer, stood at the entrance to a shallow cove at the head of the ravine. Logs and split shingles were the materials used in its construction, and these but sparingly, since there were but a single room and a loft,—the latter reached by a ladder from the outside. Small as it was, however, the cabin sheltered three generations. There was the old grandfather in the chimney-nook, a veteran of the Mexican War, and there were the mountaineer and his wife, with a gamut of children running up from the toddler under foot to the eighteen-year-old daughter, whose uninherited beauty and heroic disloyalty to kith and kin have furnished the groundwork for many a moving tale of the story-tellers.

If the cabin and its indwellers were typically primitive, the welcome was in perfect keeping. When the dogs had been pacified by sundry kicks and a well-aimed blow or two from the rifle-butt, I was bidden enter.

"Come awn, come right in, stranger—ef ye kin git in for the dirt an' the chillern. We ain't nowise fixed for comp'ny, but they's allers a welcome, sich as hit air."

In the cramped interior, which at once served the various purposes of kitchen, dining-room, parlor, and dormitory, the wife and daughter were preparing the evening meal in front of the wide open fireplace; but room, and the most comfortable split-bottomed chair in the cabin, were quickly forthcoming for the guest. In the waiting interval, the grandfather, in whom age had thawed the ice of mountain reticence, beguiled the time with stories of the pioneers; but the others were silent, and one who knew them not might have doubted the sincerity of his welcome.

In a little while the housewife raked the sweet potatoes from the ashes and drew the corn-pones out of the hearth oven; but not even the supper, which was a bountiful one for a mountaineer's cabin, served to breach the barrier of reticence. After the first invitation, "Make ye an arm, stranger, make ye an arm an' reach—ye're full welcome," the silence which is golden came again and brooded over the table; but afterwards, when we gathered about the fire to smoke, the spell was broken by degrees. Being a hunter and fisherman from necessity, my host was naturally curious to know why one should turn his back upon the comforts of the town to tramp uncounted miles through the mountains with a fly-rod; and in the cross-fire of question and answer he was led by littles to speak more freely of the things concerning himself and his kind.

"Yes, I reckon you-uns'd 'low hit was a toler'ble pore sort of a way to git along. Times I 'low that-a-way myself, but hit thess nacherly look like there hain't nothin' else for we-uns to do. Times I 'low hit'd be better to th'ow hit all up an' go somewhars else—Texas, 'r the like. Ever be'n to Texas?"

I answered, and then diplomatically steered him away from the divagation.

"No, thar's toler'ble little that we-uns kin do to raise money. Times hit seem like we-uns cayn't make enough to pay the taxes. The lan's mighty pore on these yer mountings, an' what little craps we-uns do git cayn't be hauled nowhars whar they'll sell."

At this point in the conversation I ventured to suggest that some of the mountaineers knew how to transmute their corn into something which was at once portable and salable. My host eyed me in silence for a while, speaking again when his native shrewdness assured him that he was not entertaining an enemy unawares.

"'Stillin' hit, I reckon ye mean. Yes, but thar's a heap o' resk about that thar. The revenuers air purty toler'ble thick, an' a 'stiller nev' knows what minute's a-gwine to be the nex'. I nev' could onderstand why the gover'ment's so mighty partic'lar 'bout that thar. Bes' we-uns kin do, thar cayn't be enough liquor 'stilled in the mountings to hurt nobody; more'n all that, we-uns fit for the gover'ment in war-times, an' hit thess nacherly look like hit ortn't to be hard on we-uns atter that thar."

I agreed with him honestly, and then tried to show that the net of

the revenue law, though set to capture the big fish, must of necessity take in both great and small; that the underlying principle of equal rights would not admit of exceptions.

"I reckon ye're right; but hit do seem like the gover'ment mought raise hits taxes 'thout starvin' we-uns plum out'n the country. I ric'lect a man on this yer ve'y mounting that nev' did 'stil nare bushel o' corn 'ceppin' to raise the money to pay his'n taxes; an' yit they-all tuk him an' sent him to the pen'tenshry, an' the woman an' chillern might' nigh starve' 'fore ever he come back."

Admitting the premises, the argument was unanswerable; and presently my host went out, and I saw him no more. The reason for his absence suggested itself at once, and the inference became a conclusion when the daughter gave me a candle and left me at the foot of the ladder which led to my bed in the loft. It was a moonlight night, and the small cornfield filling the cove behind the cabin made a yellow blur on the landscape. Here was a farmer who appeared to keep no animals, and whose holding was miles from any market and practically inaccessible for wheeled vehicles. Why should the man raise corn under such conditions? There was only one answer to that question, and it received its confirmation in the morning when my host kept his bed during breakfast.

"Andy he's sort o' porely this mornin', an' I 'lowed he'd better not git up," said the wife, in explanation; but he seemed to be sleeping soundly enough, so far as one might judge from appearances, and I went my way silently incredulous, regretting a little that I had been so near to a secret still without having been permitted to share the vigil of its owner.

I have quoted the mountaineer at some length, both because it is interesting to get the moonshiner's point of view in his own speech, and because he sets forth in so many words the reasons for his existence. Whiskey-making is no new thing to him. His forefathers, the pioneers, who cleared the way before the advancing army of agriculturists in the early settlement of the region west of Virginia and the Carolinas, were distillers before they were law-breakers. Aside from woodcraft, it was their single art, handed down from father to son from the days when their ancestors made poteen in the Irish hills or usquebaugh in the Scottish Highlands.

When the Excise Act of 1791 made their industry illegal, the mountaineers were already a people separate and apart, insulated by their manners, customs, and encompasments from their more prosperous neighbors in the fertile valleys. Hence they were enabled to ignore the law, and for more than half a century they were practically unmolested in the exercise of what came to be considered an inalienable right. The moral effect upon the people of this long period of immunity can scarcely be estimated. To the mountaineer, turning his corn into whiskey seems as natural and right as changing his apples into cider does to the Northern owner of orchards. From his restricted point of view, the tax on the manufacture of spirituous liquors is a thing accursed,—an unjust measure directed against his inherent right to do what he will with his own. For this cause it is next to im-

possible to convince him that an infraction of the revenue laws is a thing intrinsically wrong; he is not sufficiently in touch with modern civilization or the body politic to realize his moral obligations as a citizen.

Moreover, aside from his convictions in the matter, his temptations to become a law-breaker are very considerable. In addition to the fact that he cannot market his crop in its natural state,—a condition which puts him at once in the very forefront of the battle in the struggle for existence,—he is usually remote from towns and so unable to procure even the small alcoholic basis needed for the simple remedies which he compounds from the roots and herbs of his native forests. A trifling need, one may say, yet sickness is a mighty lever; and since the penalties imposed by law extend to the *carrier* of untaxed liquor, many a mountaineer has been led into wrong-doing by motives which were quite the reverse of criminal.

To cite an example. In a certain townless district of the Great Smoky Mountains, an old man once trudged many miles through the darkness of a stormy night to buy a quart of whiskey at a secret still. His wife was sick, and the liquor was needed for medicinal purposes; therefore, in the sight of his neighbors, at least, the man had just cause for setting aside his scruples, if he had any. He obtained the whiskey, but on his return home was apprehended with the telltale bottle in his possession. He thought his case a hard one at best; but when he was brought into court and there learned that the law made his punishment three times heavier than that of the men who distilled the liquor, it is safe to presume that his loyalty as a citizen suffered a shock from which it never fully recovered. One thing is certain: when the judge, in view of the extenuating circumstances, exercised his prerogative and suspended judgment, the old man went back to the mountains with a story which was calculated to make his district a difficult one for the officers; and so it remains to this day.

Notwithstanding such prosecutions, however, and the consequent ill feeling stirred up by them, the moonshiners and their sympathizers generally offer little more than a passive resistance to the raids of the revenue officers. And this is the more remarkable when one remembers that the mountaineers come of fighting stock, and that personal wrongs among them are usually redressed without the aid of judge or jury. A closer study of the mountain character—and one which the novelist seems not to have made—explains the apparent contradiction, and also reveals much that is praiseworthy. As a people, the mountaineers are simple and primitive; but, while they have taken on none of the gloss of civilization, they are singularly free from its vices. Theft is uncommon, immorality is rare, and truthfulness is the rule rather than the exception. Their poverty is great, but their hospitality is unbounded. Their enmity is apt to be lasting, but their loyalty to kinsmen and friends is invincible. The latter-day economist may call them thriftless and improvident, but they take privations as a matter of course and ask aid of no man. In the steeple-chase of modern progress they have been left far behind; lacking the means to encourage the schoolmaster, they have gradually lost the inclination; the world around them has moved forward, but they have stood still.

Out of such material is made the illicit distiller of fact. He is neither a bandit nor a highwayman, a disturber of the peace nor, in respect to formularies other than the revenue statutes, a law-breaker. Least of all, perhaps, is he a desperado. Within a month of this present writing, a traveller on one of the Tennessee railways entered the smoking-car of the train. In the rear seat sat an officer in charge of a "covey" of moonshiners flushed by him on the mountain the night before. There were twelve in the party; they had yielded without resistance to one man; and—most singular circumstance of all, in the South—the deputy had not found it necessary to put them in irons.

At their trial the members of this party will doubtless plead guilty to a man, though a little hard swearing would probably clear half of them; they will beg for mercy or for light sentences; and those of them who promise amendment will most likely never be again brought in on the same charge, for the mountaineer is prone to keep his promises, amendatory or otherwise.

A venerable judge, in whom judicial severity is tempered by a generous admixture of loving-kindness and mercy, and whose humane decisions have made his name a word to conjure with among the dwellers in the waste places, tells a story which emphasizes the promise-keeping trait in the mountain character. A hardened sinner of the stills, whose first and second offences were already recorded against him, was once again brought to book by the vigilance of the revenue-men. As an old offender, who had neither promised nor repented, it was like to go hard with him; and he begged earnestly, not for liberty, but for a commutation of his sentence which would send him to jail instead of the penitentiary, promising that so long as the judge remained upon the bench he would neither make nor meddle with illicit whiskey. He won his case, and was sent to jail for a term of eleven months. This was in summer. Six months later, when the first snows began to powder the bleak summits of Chilhowee, the judge received a letter from the convict. It was a simple-hearted petition for a "furlough" of ten days, pathetic and eloquent in its primitive English and quaint misspelling. Would the good judge let him off for just ten days? Winter was coming on, and the wife and children were alone in the cabin on the mountain, with no one to make provision for their wants. He would not overstay the time, and he would "certain shore" come back and surrender himself.

His petition was granted, and, true to his word, the mountaineer returned on the tenth day and gave himself up to the sheriff. He served the remainder of his sentence, and after his release kept his pledge so long as the judge remained on the bench. I would the story ended here, but the truth is pitiless. When the conditions of his promise no longer bound him, the mountaineer went back to his old trade; and only a few days since, his still was raided and he was shot and killed.

Mountain whiskey, known in its habitat as "moonshine," "wild-cat," "corn," "old corn," or "pine-top," is a colorless liquid, raw and fiery to the civilized palate, with a faint smoky aroma which is its only quality in common with the usquebaugh of the Scottish Highlands.

Its makers know none of the arts of adulteration, hence it is pure and free from drugs. As a beverage, it is unique; and as an intoxicant, for the outlander at least, it is a profound success. Singularly enough, though the mountaineers themselves drink it freely, over-indulgence among them is rare, and, in a region where whiskey is rather more plentiful than the necessities of life, there are but few drunkards.

Commenting upon its combative properties, an old resident of one of the valley towns said to me, "It's a blame' ugly drunk; I reckon ther' ain't no more fightin'er liquor this side o' the Mexican aguardenty. Now, ther' was the time when Jim Hallabee got hisself killed up in that ther' argyment long with Jud Byars. They'd both been fillin' up on pine-top, an' Jud he——" I had to listen to his pointless narrative of battle, murder, and sudden death, but the reader shall be spared.

The moonshiner's distillery is a very primitive affair. Occasionally it is housed in a cave, or in a crevice of the cliff; oftener it is found in a little ravine, in a laurel-screened hollow on the plateau, or in the depths of the forest. Failing the shelter afforded by a cave, the apparatus is covered by no roof other than the sky, and shut in by no walls save those builded by the trees or the undergrowth. The "copper" is set in a furnace built of stones and plastered with clay; a stream of water from the nearest brook serves for a condensing bath for the worm; and these, with a tub to catch the drippings, complete the plant.

Notwithstanding the fact that the still is often the common property of an entire neighborhood, its capacity is usually very small,—so small, indeed, that were the law to take cognizance of quantity the moonshiner would be the most inconsequent of offenders. Stories are not lacking to tell of apple-brandy stills made out of a teapot; and in at least one authenticated case the legend has a basis of fact. An old mountaineer was arrested and taken three hundred miles from his home on Sand Mountain to answer for an alleged infraction of the revenue laws. The still was produced in court; it was a common tin teapot, with a series of wooden tubes for a worm. The judge dismissed the case, sent the old man home, and gave a free rendering of the law of common sense to the over-zealous constabulary.

In operating a secret still, every man interested bears an equal share. Sentries are posted day and night, and a surprise by the officers is an infrequent occurrence. A resort to violence in its defence is the exception, since the most ignorant of the mountaineers knows that a single officer has the authority and resources of the government at his back. Strangers, however, whose business is unknown are sometimes intimidated, though this, too, is the exception. Oftener the wayfarer who happens to stumble upon a still is invited to make himself useful by cutting a stick of wood, or by feeding the fire,—services which are supposed to make him *particeps criminis* in the illegal industry.

In disposing of his product the moonshiner is compelled to resort to various artifices to escape detection. Formerly he used to bring his whiskey to town on "first Mondays," or other court-days, dispensing it from a spigoted cask in his wagon to all comers and in quantities to suit, much as the Northern farmer vends his cider. Later, when an increase in the number of deputy collectors made this plan impractica-

ble, it became the custom to sell the liquor through some friendly valley farmer. When this, in turn, grew dangerous, the mountaineer retreated to his stronghold and let it be noised about that his customers must seek him. In some localities a distiller bolder than his companions would hold nightly appointments with thirsty humanity on some lonely cliff; and a modification of this plan was adopted by a band of moonshiners operating on the plateau of the Cumberlands above a small mining town on the railway. Shortly after dark on pleasant summer evenings the townsfolk would hear the mellow notes of a wooden horn echoing over the valley, and a light would be seen swinging on the crest of an inaccessible cliff which rises abruptly behind the village. It was the signal of the moonshiners; and whosoever would climb to the base of the crag would find a cord dangling below the light, with a buckskin wallet and a hook at its lower end. Putting his money in the wallet and hanging his jug on the hook, the bibulous one had only to wait until the line could be drawn up and lowered again.

After a time this plan too became hazardous, and at present much more circuitous methods are employed. A hollow tree or a stump in the forest on the mountain is designated by common consent. In this the purchaser deposits his money and a receptacle for the liquor, and goes his way in peace for an hour or more. When he returns,—if he has been acting, meanwhile, in good faith,—the money has been taken and the jug filled; by whom, the buyer least of all men is able to say. Here and there, in the remoter districts, a friendly “fence” is yet to be found in the neighborhood of a secret still, but in this case the liquor is sold only to those who are known to be tried men and true; a stranger will bargain in vain, though he urge in extenuation all the ills to which the flesh is heir.

These are the ordinary methods of sale adopted when the market for his product is normally active; but in time of need the moonshiner who has the courage of his convictions will not hesitate to take greater risks. Now and then he will venture into town with a few filled jugs concealed under a load of corn, garden-produce, or split stove-wood, taking his chances on disposing of the liquor as opportunity may offer. Again, he will sling a small jug to a stout belt, provide himself with a tin cup and a funnel, and, with his portable saloon hidden under a great-coat, will hang upon the edges of a crowd at an open-air political meeting or other gathering, filling bottles or selling by the drink. Under such circumstances he takes his liberty in his hand. If detected, he will usually fight before he is taken; and, knowing little of the ethics of civilized warfare, he is very likely to make the struggle a battle royal, as many a less primitive person might under similar conditions.

There are also occasions when he will even resist the officers in his native mountains; and, admitting his premises, it is a wonder that he does not always do so. From the mountaineer's point of view, the moonshiner's occupation is not only blameless, but it is pursued under exigencies and harassments that must appear grievous and oppressive. It is only with the greatest difficulty that he can procure and assemble

the various parts of his distilling apparatus; and when it is in working order he must hide it in the loneliest place he can find, remote from even the scanty comforts of the mountaineer's cabin. After that, he must guard it with unremitting vigilance, watching it day and night, and living the life of a hunted outlaw between times; and all this when he is only doing what he firmly believes he has a perfect right to do. Then comes the catastrophe. A band of armed deputies swoops down upon his secluded retreat; if he surrender, he has to stand quietly by and witness the destruction of his property, with the comforting assurance that the jail or the penitentiary will presently make a longer or shorter gap in his freedom. The alternative is resistance, and occasionally he accepts it, though rarely with the enthusiastic ardor ascribed to him by the novelist or the newspaper space-writer. A precipitate retreat, a running fight through the forest punctuated by a few dropping shots from squirrel rifles and Winchesters, and the morning papers announce in leaded head-lines,—

FIERCE BATTLE WITH THE WILDCATTERS!

MOONSHINE JAKE'S SECRET STILL

RAIDED BY THE DEPUTIES!

A DESPERATE STRUGGLE, IN WHICH THE

FATAL WINCHESTER GETS IN ITS

DEADLY WORK!

After which startling introduction one goes on to the details given in the smaller type of the despatch with quickened pulse and apprehensive interest sharp-set, only to find that the reporter has most unaccountably omitted a list of the dead and wounded or any further mention thereof.

Such battles there are now and then, but their infrequency is the best possible proof of the mountaineer's good sense and peaceable inclinations; and their bloodlessness becomes evident when it is remembered that in a single judicial district in Tennessee there are at present over two hundred moonshiners awaiting trial, all of whom were taken without loss of life, and most of whom surrendered without resistance of any sort.

This, then, is the moonshiner of fact, defined in general terms and without prejudice to the assumption that here and there in the thinly peopled and slightly policed mountain region one may occasionally stumble upon bands of desperadoes who are also illicit distillers. Such bands there are, but they are generally made up of escaped criminals who have taken to moonshining as an occupation at once less dangerous and more remunerative than highway-robbery or petty larceny. The outlaws from whom they are recruited are not always mountaineers,—save by adoption,—and it is but just to add that they are held in equal disrepute by the men of the plateaus and the farmers of the valleys.

From my study window one may look out upon a forest-clad mountain whose summit lifts the sky-line of the western horizon, and whose gray cliffs are near enough to reflect the rays of the morning sun. Somewhere in one of its many gorges is said to be the haunt of

a noted outlaw and his clansmen, among whom there are escaped criminals of every degree of turpitude. One is a murderer, two more are horse-thieves, others are convicts from the State chain-gangs. They are said to be moonshiners; and, as they commit no open depredations, the inference is plausible. But on no account should the simple-hearted mountaineer, who raises corn that he cannot sell and distils it because he thinks he has an inherent right so to do, be made to answer for their sins in addition to his own. He has nothing in common with them save the occupation in which they are, in a certain sense, his competitors. In the gang in question, so far as may be ascertained, the people of the plateaus have no representatives; and I shall have written in vain if the fact be not clearly established that the sheriff could raise a posse for its capture or dispersal quite as readily on the mountain as in the valley.

To the raids of the deputy collectors these escaped criminals often oppose the most desperate resistance, not because they are distillers, but because many of them are wanted for far more serious crimes; and in his reports of such conflicts the war-correspondent may perhaps be excused for mistaking a consequence for a cause. None the less, it is an injustice to the moonshiner *per se*, of whom his very judges say that he is but an ignorant countryman, obstinately honest, perversely truthful, unlettered but shrewd, and, withal, never a criminal in the dictionary definition of the word.

And, finally, a word to the fellow-craftsmen of the guild of letters, from one who, like Pencraft, lacked prescience and so was once moved to add his mite to the unrealities of mountain literature. Hang not, I pray you, the wickedness of your mountaineer villain upon the peg of illicit distilling. Make him a desperado incarnadine and a moonshiner, if you please, but not the former because of the latter. Moreover, what is written is written, but let nothing herein set forth be taken as an admission that the sunny Southland, urban or rural, mountain or valley, is deficient in sound, flawless timber for the making of fictional evil-doers, gentle or simple. The while the rising tide of civilization laves but the foot of the mountain; so long as the personal quarrel is fought out between man and man; and what time the ready weapon anticipates the Anglo-Saxon fist,—the folk-lore of the South will honor the draft of the story-teller even though it be filled out to four figures and written in red ink.

Francis Lynde.

NATIVITY.

NOT only far away and long ago,
 With wondering joy and prescience of woe,
 Came God to man on that transfiguring morn,
 But now, but now, with wordless ecstasy,
 Yet trembling for a grief that is to be,
 In every mother's bosom Christ is born.

Charles G. D. Roberts.

THE WOMAN OF ASBESTOS.

IT was the field-day of the life of Marco Torrelli. His play, "The Woman of Asbestos," accepted by a Neapolitan manager, placarded upon walls, heralded by all sorts of gossip, was to be performed that evening for the first time.

He was an ardent lover of the drama; in the amateur theatrical club of his native provincial town he was a leading actor and a literary authority. He had the reputation of knowing the world,—a fame based, perhaps, upon the reading of current French novels and plays, and upon the habit of uttering inexpensive epigrams of a cynical quality which somehow suggested an impassioned and tender heart petrified by disillusion. This gave him great prestige with the young ladies of his acquaintance, who would have liked to repeat the famous experiment of Hannibal, softening that rock. No, no: Hannibal did it by means of vinegar; the girls poured only the honey of their flatteries.

Afterward, when Marco Torrelli had proved the solidity of his flinty heart, which absolutely would not disintegrate, the honey turned to vinegar of the sharpest, and they voted him to be a stupid fellow, an egoist without true feeling for art. He found himself, all at once, assigned to unsympathetic rôles,—at first detested rivals, then heavy fathers, and even comic personages,—while another young man succeeded to the rank of "first lover," which had been Torrelli's prerogative. The day when they gave to him the part of an old family servant with a dust-brush, he silently turned on his heel and renounced the *Filodrammatici* once for always.

He went home, and after serious reflection remained persuaded that he had indeed a vocation for the drama—but as an author of plays. Already he had in his desk several quires of respectable blank verse. He would write a play that should be his revenge on contemporaries and his epistle to posterity. It is true that not all the letters to posterity reach their address, for Time is an untrustworthy postman. However, that need not prevent one from sending them.

In the sanity of the morrow's daylight, Torrelli perceived that in this end of the century great and primitive passions are no longer in vogue. The period of romanticism is past, when "Hernani" could be carried by acclaim of a generous clique. The public is apt to yawn at blank verse, and to suspect the comic in Alexandrines, which are all very well about a hat or a lap-dog, but are no longer able to elicit grand emotions: like the elephant, terrible in the armies of ancient Persia, but absurd when, in his unwieldy bulk, he is seen nowadays at the circus.

"If I don't wish to be laughed at,—and heaven knows that I've had enough of it with those girls," said Torrelli to himself,—*"I must write in prose. Psychology, realism, above all, a feminine paradox,—that is my business. First, let us be logical. My French colleagues"*

(for he had begun by dramatizing himself, so much so that he counted Signor M. Torrelli in the list which numbers MM. Sardou, Dumas fils, Coppée, and the others) "have exploited the problems of love and of its substitutes, passion and caprice. There may be a few turns of the kaleidoscope which *ces messieurs* have not yet tried—who knows? But, meanwhile, a heroine palpitating with verity, yet loveless,—absolutely incapable of the sentiment, impervious, irresponsible, impracticable, non-inflammable—that's it! Non-inflammable. A woman of asbestos; of delicate fibre, which, however, flames have no power to assail. Yes, my heroine shall be the Woman of Asbestos."

Which brings the story just to where it began,—the first representation of the new play in five acts, by the brilliant young author Signor M. Torrelli, *La Donna d'Amianto*, etc., etc. (Who wants to re-read a theatre-bill of yester-year?)

Torrelli was fortunate: the auguries were favorable all along the line. By influence of a former townsman, his play had been promptly examined by an eminent manager, who accepted it. (No matter for the name of the impresario, for he is very busy and hasn't time to read the MSS. of Tizio, Caio, and Sempronio, nor of their American cousins, Thomas, Richard, and Henry.) The rôle of Bianca—the heroine made of asbestos—was intrusted to the famous Maria Massimiliani, the extraordinary actress with magical green eyes, gifted with a subtle fascination which is the despair of her sisters in Melpomene; she who is known to pass whole hours before the cage of tigers at the menagerie in order to imitate the long, lithe step of the terrible creatures made of steel and of velvet, with tawny hair like her own. Only, that of the tigers is colored by nature. The "first lover," Count Riccardo, was to be played by Teodoro Perotti—enough of himself to attract to the theatre all the Neapolitan ladies, flattering them by his art which apparently addresses tender glances and words to every box at the same time. The treacherous Parisian rival, Victor Dumont, was to be represented by that clever Egidio Frasca, whose manner of lighting a cigarette on the stage wins for him a fresh harvest of sentimental billets after each performance. The box-receipts were promising. It only remained for the play to make a good impression upon the public.

Torrelli passed a day of contradictory and exhausting emotions. He felt himself to be like the india-rubber which held together the MS. of his drama. First, hope pulled him out to twice his natural extent; then fear let him collapse, shortened and limp of spirit. Would the piece succeed? Or would it make a fiasco? These were the questions that tormented and kept him restless; smoking four puffs of a cigar and then throwing it away; drinking sips of water, for a dryness of the mouth which was really the thirst for fame; looking out of the window, as if he expected Fortune to come and ring the door-bell. As the evening approached, nervous shivers and languors assailed the poor young playwright. Who would comprehend his beautiful Bianca, his white lady, cold among the ardors which she inspired, dying of that gelid isolation of her spirit? There is a moment for most plays when the merest chance, the cynical smile of a

newspaper critic or the jeer of an ungodly *gamin* near the roof, can turn the scale and condemn the piece. "Somebody laughed" is the real epitaph of many a respectable drama. Even to think of such a mishap, Torrelli seemed to see his heroine become ugly, insipid, meaningless, and fade from his fancy. Stupid creature, why had she emerged from nothingness to betray him into a blunder? Of all the frigid conceits that ever entered the mind of a writer, that Woman of Asbestos was easily chief.

Torrelli, in a panic, would have liked to take the next train for his native town and there devote himself to the studies of law which lately he had abandoned. Then returned his Woman of Asbestos in all her power; he thrilled with premonitions of a great success, applause, women in tears, men pale as the handkerchiefs that they waved, twenty-four calls before the curtain, more applause, cries of "The author!" the whole house rising to its feet, a rain of laurel wreaths and bouquets, a tumult dimly perceived through his intense emotion; then managers, actors, journalists, crowding about him with compliments and brilliant propositions,—the entire triumphal phantasmagoria of the playwright who has conquered his public.

At last it was time to dress and go to the house of the newspaper man with whom Torrelli was to dine. This friend—the former fellow-townsmen—and his wife were to accompany Torrelli to the theatre where two dramas would be enacted at the same time,—the Donna d'Amianto, and, still more important, that of the fate of the author.

At Roberto Giusti's, Torrelli felt better. The newspaper man took things as they came, having lost long ago the self-consciousness and anxiety of a provincial; and Donna Argemira, the wife of Giusti, was so frank, so smiling, that the dramatist was somewhat reassured. But in his heart, deep in that little chamber where our emotions hold committee-meetings which make no formal report even to ourselves, Torrelli knew that for the first time he was to measure his strength against the hard world. Until then, he had lived in a small sphere of his own creation, where he, enamoured of his incombustible Bianca, was yet master of the situation and of her. In those dreams he had always had the upper hand; it is true that he had wept, some great hot tears, when the Woman of Asbestos killed herself—at his own dictation. Before his writing-desk, he had been at once a lover and a tyrant. But in the theatre! One can't reckon on the mood of the public.

Meanwhile, Giusti told anecdotes of first performances, of incredible blunders of actors which, after all, made the fortune of the piece, of adverse opinions later corrected. Donna Argemira, in her rich tranquil voice, confirmed these comforting reminiscences. From all this Torrelli took courage.

As they entered the box, in that theatre full of light and of color, crowded with people awaiting the new play, Torrelli spoke softly to Donna Argemira:

"Do you know, signora, I'm horribly frightened?"

She laughed without malice. "'Tis the intermittent fever of a *début*. Who will invent a moral quinine?"

And Giusti, who had heard their phrases, added, kindly, "Your play will please, my dear fellow. But, even if not, yours would not be the first nor the last failure. And one must always try again, after having felt the claws of the public."

Fine encouragement! For already poor Torrelli, face to face with his public, was under the power of its feline fascination, hypnotized by all those gleaming opera-glasses turned toward the box where the author was known to be seated. It seemed to him that he could not move, under the spell, at once terrible and lulling.

The overture was played. The curtain rose upon the drawing-room scene in the house of Bianca. Some "walking gentlemen" came and went, and talked, to let the audience know about this cold woman, the despair of lovers whose name was legion. Then the stage was empty, and the muted violins and 'celli were wailing as Maria Massimiliani made her effective entrance, in a gown of white silken stuff, trailing in statuesque folds. Here at last was the Woman of Asbestos as Torrelli had dreamed her,—all white, cold, diaphanous, blazing only with the flames of the opals and the diamonds on her hands, her throat, her hair. Now the servant brings to Bianca a note, which she opens with a dangerous toy, a little mediæval poniard which the writer of that billet, the Count Riccardo, had given to her. (It may as well be observed, right here, that our good Torrelli had planned a later appearance, *à la* Sardou, of that gift of friendship.) The count would pay her a visit in an hour, to present to her M. Victor Dumont, who had begged for that honor. Of course the count was the adorer who had the best chance with the Woman of Asbestos, and equally of course he introduced his rival.

But, since those who saw the first, and sole, performance of the Woman of Asbestos know the story, and nobody will ever see another representation of it, the scenario may be remitted. Enough to confess that, despite the exquisite graces of Maria Massimiliani, the glances and the accents of the *jeune premier*, and the cigarette lighted and half smoked by that clever Egidio Frasca, the first act was not successful. The good-natured but not inexperienced public had already seen adaptations, more or less direct, from our masters the Frenchmen. They applauded the excellence of the intentions of the author and of the acting of the company. They permitted the play to proceed.

Torrelli suffered mutely. Giusti sought to console him; Donna Argemira began to point out to him various distinguished personalities in the house. All at once, like a soft ray of the moon, amid that glare of artificial lights, there appeared to Torrelli the figure of a blonde woman in an opposite box. She, and not that actress with the enamelled whiteness, the tawny hair, the neurotic starts which caused the brilliants and the opals to flash out their fires, might have been the Woman of Asbestos. Young, calm, with flaxen tresses, wearing a gown of lustreless white wool, with rows of opaque pearls around her throat, in her hands a bouquet of odorless white bouvardias, the imaginary heroine of Torrelli was materialized before his sight.

"Who is that lady, dressed in white, opposite?" he inquired of Donna Argemira.

"I don't know her. Perhaps Roberto can tell us."

But the journalist could not say. She was perhaps a stranger in Naples.

To Torrelli, excited and unhappy, it seemed as if that beautiful young woman saw and pitied his mortification. He fancied that more than once when a fortunate point was applauded she turned an involuntary glance toward the box where he sat. He was no coxcomb; he did not take for himself the almost imperceptible signs of interest, but admired in her the womanly gentleness that is sorry for the pain of any creature whatever. Meanwhile the play continued. Torrelli came, little by little, to the conclusion that the passions which at his writing-desk had appeared to him great and imposing were upon the stage illogical, insufficient, fantastic. The hero now seemed to him improbable; the Parisian rival was the old conventional type whom everybody recognizes as soon as he enters the scene. Torrelli had not yet, however, lost faith in his *Woman of Asbestos*; and Maria Massimiliani was not to blame for anything that happened, for she did her best with the part. The audience watched every movement of her sinuous shape, would not lose a tone of her vibratory, pathetic voice.

But first the actors, then the critics, then Torrelli himself, finally the public,—all but those worthy citizens to whom the theatre is always the theatre, a real festival,—knew that the play had failed. Poor Torrelli began to hate his *Woman of Asbestos*, and also Maria Massimiliani. And always the lady of the opposite box unconsciously rained balm upon the fever of his lacerated self-esteem. His ideal changed, then and there, from the tragically impassible *Woman of Asbestos* to a creature more human, sympathetic, moved to tender pity.

In the final scene of Torrelli's play—those know who saw it that evening—the *Woman of Asbestos* makes desperate attempts to light within herself some flame of love, however feeble, at the generous blaze of the passion of Riccardo. All the others have left her cold,—even that Parisian with the cigarette, who might have been expected to be capable of pleasing her. She permits Riccardo to take her in his arms, to call her his adored bride,—a phrase which is liked by the upper gallery,—and to imprint kisses upon her brow. Then, in a sudden tempest of tears, Bianca declares that all is in vain, that they have but too truly named her the *Woman of Asbestos*, that she never has loved, never can love. But she is not ungrateful; and she will prove it to Riccardo.

The audience knew that something was to happen when Maria Massimiliani, still in the arms of the *jeune premier*, bent suddenly backward at a gymnastic angle, caught up from a table the poniard,—that brave little poniard *à la Sardou*, that wasn't there for nothing,—and the *Woman of Asbestos* stabbed herself to prove that her incom-bustibility was not her own fault, but the fault of nature that had made her so. And, since tragedy consists in the expiation of other people's sins (this axiom is one of Torrelli's invention), his heroine was logical in her suicide.

It had all seemed so natural, so inevitable, to Marco Torrelli in his vine-shaded study, in the provincial town. Now, he saw the spinal

contortions of the actress and the automatic start of the actor, who of course cried, "Bianca! Dead! dead!" The curtain came down with a fall heavier than usual; there was a pause of indecision; then some scattering voices called for the author. He, poor fellow, had escaped in a cab to his hotel. So ended the unique representation of the Woman of Asbestos; and so the brilliant young dramatist Signor M. Torrelli fled the theatre.

Giusti and Donna Argemira, in *tête-à-tête*, pitied him. "The fact is, my dear," said the newspaper man, "that friend Torrelli this time hasn't hit the mark, and I'm glad that I have not to write the critique of the Woman of Asbestos. To think that we used to consider him a genius!"

"I am very sorry for him," said Argemira.

"So am I. But one must learn his limitations. I remember when I was undecided whether to be a poet like Leopardi or a romancist like the elder Dumas. It appeared to me that Fame held her hands behind her with a treasure in each fist and invited me to choose. Later, I was glad enough to obtain a reporter's place on a newspaper. Torrelli is several years younger than I; there's time for him yet."

"It seems to me that he needs to experience life; he knows the world only in theory. He is too expert in fancy and too inexperienced in fact."

"Oh, there is no doubt that he will receive his lesson in time. Indeed, this evening he has been to the school of a severe master, the public."

And they dismissed the subject.

Naturally, the author of the unsuccessful play had a sleepless night. But Torrelli was not without courage and firmness of purpose.—although the frank exposition of all his inward sentiments may have made him appear like a simpleton. The scene of his defeat should be in future the scene of his triumphs. He would not leave Naples: "Here I am, and here I stay," he said, borrowing the words of the *Rè Galantuomo*. He would ask Giusti to recommend him for some modest place on the newspaper; he would study metropolitan life; he would, himself, live and experience; working humbly and with constancy, he would by degrees prepare himself to emerge with a leonine leap and seize the laurels of the stage. (It is true that lions don't care for laurels; but all the same Torrelli meant that he would not renounce the dramatic career.)

The next morning he flung himself upon his fate in the daily papers. The critics evidently wished to be kind to him. They praised the pure Italian of his style, his respect for the dramatic unities, the novelty of his fire-proof heroine. But they did not conceal their impression that the play had failed because it was based upon second-hand traditions of the modern French drama, upon fanciful conceptions of character and of life, and upon a thesis invented, not observed, by the writer. In brief, youth and inexperience were the extenuating pleas made by the critics for Signor Torrelli. The tide of public opinion—*come sa di sale!*—was against him, and overwhelmed him in a gloomy flood.

But as the patriarch Noah had after forty days his dove and the relative olive-branch, so to Torrelli, the next morning after his mishap, came the messenger-boy of the theatre with a letter,—a little letter, white, unscented, written in those tall, angular characters which so many women affect and which are so difficult to hold at the right focus. The lines were very few:

"SIGNOR MARCO TORRELLI:

"Do not be discouraged. To have spoken clearly and intimately to one sincere heart is worth more than to satisfy the judgment of the critics. It would give me pleasure to know that my few words of gratitude shall have reached you.

"O.

"NAPLES, ferma in posta."

What kind voice was this? Who could this unknown woman be? O. might mean nothing, or it might signify a whole eternity of fame, affection—who knew what? But to compute the value of that O. there was needed another figure; at present it was only a cipher. Within its circle, however, poor Torrelli, longing for comfort, imagined all sorts of delightful mysteries. He put the letter in his pocket-book.

That evening he visited his newspaper friend. Later, Giusti having been obliged to go to the office of his journal, Torrelli was moved to confide to the sympathetic Donna Argemira the letter of O.

"What do you think of it, signora? Do not be severe with the writer."

"I think her an honest woman who has not made a mistake in addressing you. Your play pleased her; more than that, it touched her, and she in return wished to give you the comfort of her gratitude. She is rather original, it appears to me, and a little impulsive."

"Ought I to answer her?"

"Perhaps."

"Because—I have already done so."

"And you have said to her——? Pardon me if I am indiscreet, but half a confession is too little."

"I thanked her; I told her that now I should not despair any more; that the praise of one generous spirit was enough to make me hope everything."

"Bravo! For a first letter, that wasn't insignificant, Signor Torrelli."

"Now you are laughing at me."

"Has not Roberto told you that I always laugh at people whom I like? But I shall not like you any more, unless you promise to keep me posted in this affair of the mysterious O."

Naturally, he promised. When Giusti came home, he said that he had spoken with the managing editor, who would like to try Torrelli on some reviews of new books. The assignment was gladly accepted.

Torrelli had framed his reply to the unknown correspondent so that another note from her was almost required. If she would not write again? That would be a new disappointment. But she wrote,

and this time somewhat at length, letting herself be divined a little more clearly, but with a reserve and dignity which left no doubt that she was a woman of right feeling as well as of heart. The correspondence became regular and frequent. Torrelli begged her to permit him to know her identity, to recognize her even at a distance; but O. answered that it would be of no use; she wished to remain for him an impersonal being who comprehended and would console him from the clouds that veiled her.

This vaporous and mystical imagery might suit the taste of his gentle inspirer, but not his own wishes. He complained to Donna Argemira; but she had no positive aid to give him.

"Cannot you guess who O. may be?"

"Not even by an idea."

"You remember that blonde, opposite to us, at the theatre: could it be she?"

His face glowed. "Oh, I have thought of her!"

So, in default of facts, this theory was accepted. Neither Donna Argemira nor Torrelli talked of it to Giusti, for he, a real journalist, was sceptical and would have laughed at it. Donna Argemira inquired among her friends as to the blonde beauty. Somebody said that she was not a resident of Naples and had left the city. However that might be, frequent letters from O. reached Torrelli. He was more and more enchanted with her wit, her delicacy, her knowledge of the world, her moments of caprice and of child-like enthusiasm. After a while he read to Donna Argemira only fragments of the letters. Then he ceased to bring the papers, but repeated some things which O. had written; then he reported the general tenor of her discourses.

Meanwhile the surface scratches of vanity—which really smart more keenly than deeper moral wounds—had almost ceased to trouble Torrelli. His *Woman of Asbestos* had been a decent and decorous failure; but his newspaper work, unpretentious and regular, was highly praised in and out of the office. Also he had an idea for a novel, and wooed it in some of his leisure hours. That romance, however, remained unpublished, because the author never found a suitable end to the psychological problem involved. The genuine sentiments of his heart, that did not concern themselves with logic or with literary effect, were those poured out in his letters to O., who also certainly had the virtue of constancy. For she replied to his hopes, his discouragement, his moments of vanity, or of humiliation, which is merely vanity turned wrong side out, his scepticisms, his challenges to the universe,—all the precious rubbish of the soul of a young man of letters.

Torrelli adored this O.,—this love, sister, goddess, handmaid, mother, queen, child, as in turn she appeared to him. But he ought to have known, as the need to behold and recognize her melted into this ideal and vague worship, that he was not so much in love with her as he believed. He had ceased to pray her to lift the mystical veil which concealed her; whereas an honest fellow like Torrelli, if he really loves a woman, wants to see her face, take her hand, accompany her before the mayor and the priest, and place a chair for her behind the coffee-urn at his table. Troubadours are out of date. Torrelli

indeed liked to identify his O. with the blonde lady of the theatre; but even the impression of the latter was become rather misty.

Donna Argemira had said, "I imagine that she may be of Scandinavian race, like the fair Ophelia." And because O is the initial of Ophelia, among other nouns common and proper, they called the incognita by that name. For to adore a mere letter of the alphabet would be really absurd. And the blonde of the theatre-box, or the legendary damsel of Elsinore, either might serve as the image to whom Torrelli offered incense. It was not a person, but the spirit which animated those letters, with whom the good fellow was enchanted. However, he did not once suspect that his was an affair of the imagination and of the brain, instead of the grand passion which he had always desired to experience.

But the thing was not to remain suspended among the clouds. One day, at the office of the newspaper, Giusti said, "Apropos, Torrelli, I have met at the house of a mutual acquaintance that serious blonde—do you remember her?—whom we admired in the box opposite to ours at the theatre. She is from Lombardy, a charming and accomplished woman, Signora Ida Olivieri, the widow of an elderly naval officer, to whom they married her fresh from the convent school. He, it is said, was an excellent disciplinarian on his iron-clad—and also in his house. Signora Olivieri was much pleased with your review of that new volume of poems, and invited me to bring the writer to see her and receive her compliments. If you like, we will pay our respects to her this evening."

At the sound of her name, Torrelli was thrilled with the idea that O., the mysterious O., must really be the initial of Signora Olivieri. Amid various emotions, the joy of finding again that elusive beauty, the additional proof that she was indeed the consoling lady of the letters, an unformulated dread lest she might be in some way inferior to the ideal image of his fantasy, and, finally, a curious shadow of jealousy that Giusti had forestalled him in making her acquaintance,—amid these entangled feelings, Torrelli, as was natural, uttered a commonplace:

"I shall have the greatest pleasure to pay a visit with you this evening to Signora Olivieri."

The two journalists went off together, arm in arm, to dine at Giusti's house. Afterward Roberto said to his wife, "Torrelli and I are going to pay a visit to a lady,—precisely to that wonderful blonde of the theatre-box." And he repeated for the benefit of Donna Argemira the information about Signora Olivieri. Then he went to get his hat and gloves.

"Roberto shall not laugh about her. From this moment I take her under my protection," said Argemira, gayly.

Torrelli was as if in a dream: "What a delight for me some day to repeat to her, as though without intention, that phrase of hers, 'To have spoken clearly and intimately to one sincere'—"

"Be silent!" Argemira interrupted him, brusquely.

"But what harm is there?"

Donna Argemira spoke with severe emphasis, detaching the words:

"There is this harm: that she would perceive that some second aim was concealed in your rather lyric expression. She would require an explanation; and how would you make it? In any event you would appear to this respectable woman either foolish or impertinent. You have no right to imagine anything with regard to her identity. If she be the lady of the letters, it is wholly her own secret, and only she can take the initiative toward its revelation. Any reference to it on your part would be indelicate, impossible. If you seem to recognize in Signora Olivieri the unknown O. of those letters, you insult her. Oh, I forbid you!"

"But, Argemira," observed Giusti, appearing at the door, "why are you scolding friend Torrelli like this?"

"Because he is too boyish," she said, laughing.

The two men went off together.

Signora Olivieri proved charming, and Torrelli repeated his visit to her as often as he could find a pretext. Then he did not wait to invent excuses, but went to see her every day, paying her ardent and undisguised court.

After questions on the part of Giusti, his wife had admitted that the little quarrel with Torrelli had been on account of a mysterious feminine correspondent of the latter, an elect soul who wished to remain behind the mask of the initial O. Torrelli was ready to be rather indiscreet, and she, Argemira, had curbed him with the counsels of an elder sister. That was all.

"Was the incognita perhaps Signora Olivieri?" asked Giusti. "Who knows that this time I have not hit the truth?"

"He had no right to believe so, as I made him observe," answered Argemira.

Just at that moment the door opened. It was Torrelli, who hastened to tell his friends of his good fortune. He was betrothed to Ida Olivieri. And he wanted them to marvel, and rejoice, and help him to turn the world upside down for the occasion.

"Now, Donna Argemira, there is nothing which shall keep me from showing to my Ida those dear letters and saying to her, You, with that kind little note, revived my courage; you have sustained it with all these that are my treasures."

"If you do so, she will detest you, and forever," said Argemira.

"But why may I not thank Ida for that condescension of hers? Pardon me, but this seems to me a fantastic scruple. With that consoling note my love began. The beautiful soul that spoke in those letters enchanted me more and more——"

"Oh, do not say so!" cried Argemira. "How do you know that it was she?"

"Are you two rehearsing a new comedy of Torrelli's?" inquired Giusti, with a little malice.

The office-boy from the editorial rooms entered at that moment with a budget of letters, which he consigned to Giusti. The journalist began to read his correspondence, after handing one of the letters to Torrelli. It was addressed in a handwriting unfamiliar to the latter.

"Do you permit me?" he asked of Donna Argemira.

"Read your letter, Signor Torrelli."

As people often do, he glanced first at the signature. Then he exclaimed, in a tone of painful surprise, "Ida Olivieri! But who then wrote those others?"

"Has she not written to you until now?" inquired Argemira.

"Never, as it has happened. Instead, we have talked. Now indeed I find myself in a position which requires serious thought and all the delicacy of a man of honor."

"What does she write?"

"Nothing particular. That is, merely about an appointment to ride with me to-morrow."

"Then——?"

"This is it. I have done very wrong—as you have warned me—in permitting myself to suppose that the mysterious O. was the lady of the theatre-box, was Ida Olivieri. What folly mine has been, to identify the two without any evidence beyond my own wishes! In my fatuity of a playwright, I would absolutely insist on importing into life as it is lived my scenic effects *à la* Sardou. Now I must think of my obligations to the unknown friend who has been for me a muse, a saint, and to whom I have expressed so much devotion, as well as of the bond which unites me to Ida Olivieri."

"You might have thought of that sooner, it seems to me."

"Do not reproach me, Donna Argemira. My foolish vanity is punished enough in the mortification which I must cause to a good and gentle woman."

"To which of the two?"

"Since Ida has said that she cares for me, I have the right to think of my own happiness only because it is also hers. And yet for so long all my thoughts, all my dreams, have been devoted to that unknown woman who had the noble and generous idea to comfort the author that failed in presence of the public. Oh, Donna Argemira, you have been from the first thy confidante,—tell me what I ought to do. I have known Ida for only a few weeks, and to her I have offered my love, my hand, and my name. To the other woman I have made no definite proffer, and yet—have I a double heart?—it is also true that I care for her, I adore her."

"No, no!" Argemira covered her face with her hands. "It was I, I, who wrote all those letters over the signature which was meant for only a zero,—nothing."

"You!" There was a moment of astonished silence; then Giusti laughed aloud, like the honest and acute newspaper man that he was.

"A thousand pardons, Giusti!" stammered Torrelli. "I meant—I did not mean——"

"I understand. You did not intend to make love to my wife," answered Giusti, with perfect good humor.

At this Argemira took courage to lift up her face, rosy with embarrassment and convulsed with laughter.

"Listen, Signor Torrelli," she said. "It is I who ought to ask pardon of you,—perhaps also of Roberto; but that will be for another time. You were rather inexpert in the world, and I flattered myself

that I could teach you something. It was a dangerous experiment; and I beg you to observe that really you never were in love with the unknown correspondent, and far less, of course, with me, who was merely the amanuensis of a non-existent person. She was an image of your brain, and your affection for her was likewise a cerebral fantasy. The woman that you love is, as you very well know, Ida Olivieri,—quite different from the others, and very much better suited to you.”

“Argemira, you have been playing with fire,” noted Giusti. “Fortunate for me that my wife has been the real Woman of Asbestos, and my friend equally acceptable to fire insurance agencies.”

After all, no harm had been done.

It was only when Torrelli had been married for some time that he ventured to relate the story to his wife. Meanwhile a friendship was firmly established between the two women. Now and then, it is true, Ida looks with a shade of curiosity at Argemira, as if she would like to investigate that affair a little more thoroughly. Was there not perhaps a trifle of flirtation between Torrelli and this clever person? But all suspicions vanish under the frank and radiant smile of Giusti's wife, who evidently opines that the world was created on purpose that her Roberto might chronicle its daily doings in his paper.

It is rumored that next season will be produced a play by the brilliant young author Signor M. Torrelli, of which the protagonist will be a new departure in modern drama, or at least the revival of a type almost forgotten,—a heroine who loves honestly, undoubtedly, with her whole heart. Quite the opposite of the Woman of Asbestos.

Elisabeth [Cavazza] Pullen.

SOME WOMEN IN DOUBLET AND HOSE.

IN aspiring to rise superior to the limitations of sex, alike in her pleasures and in her employments, the enterprise of the *fin-de-siècle* woman is not altogether a modern instance. A century and a half ago the comedy of women in doublet and hose—a comedy that occasionally rose to the rank of dignified drama, but more frequently fell to the lower range of pitiful farce—was much in vogue. Few actresses on the English stage at that period did not sooner or later in their careers feel it incumbent to distinguish themselves by at least one attempt to portray a male character. “Full of ambition, an envious emulator of every man's parts,” the actress of that day seemed to aim to take a sweet revenge for the long histrionic subordination of her sex by a bold invasion of man's own dramatic domain. From time to time afterward there were many sporadic instances of such performances, and fifty years or so ago in the United States and in England there was a brief period when the ambition of many prominent actresses thus to unsex themselves in their professional work assumed the importance of a very pronounced dramatic movement.

On the contemporaneous stage actresses who have been inflamed by

a passion to impersonate male characters have generally found the widest and most appropriate field for the exercise of their talents in variety, burlesque, or comic opera. For the most part these appearances have attracted attention merely because they have catered to that unwholesome public taste that finds a sensuous if not indeed a sensual delight in seeing women handsomely arrayed as men upon the stage. When the *danse du ventre* or the *couchée-couchée* is not available, there are these special features of the modern stage to fall back upon, and they meet the demand very well indeed. But in any consideration of the theatre in its best estate such impersonations, which are quite devoid of any right claim to histrionic merit, may be curtly dismissed without serious thought.

Of course there are some exceptions to this sweeping generalization, and it is only fair to call attention to the fact that of quite different character has been the assumption by women of male characters in legitimate opera, as Siebel in "Faust," Cherubino in "The Marriage of Figaro," Urbain in "The Huguenots," Andreluno in "Mirella," Arsaces in "Semiramide," Orpheus in "Orpheus and Eurydice," and others that may be recalled readily. Several female Romeos, notably Grisi, Pasta, and Malibran, have distinguished the operatic stage, and Malibran also sang the title rôle in Rossini's opera "Otello."

But, after all, the honest endeavor of a woman to play a male dramatic part as a man would play it without factitious appeal to the incongruity of sex is a matter entirely different from these variety, comic opera, or even grand opera performances. Many women have aspired to that distinction, and sometimes with a moderate degree of success, but the restrictions of this article may not permit an encyclopædic reference to them; nor indeed does the character of their achievements often demand such consideration. It will be sufficient if attention is called to some of the conspicuous instances in their kind. Most frequently, in the latter half of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth, these experiments were made in the lighter rôles. Peg Woffington, Mrs. Centlivre, Miss Macklin (daughter of Charles Macklin), Mrs. Abingdon, Dora Jordan, Mrs. Shaw, Isabel Dickinson, Fanny Wallack, and others played such rôles as Sir Harry Wildair, Don César de Bazan, Norval, Harry Bertram, Harry Hotspur, Claude Melnotte, Ion, Jack Sheppard, Francis Osbaldiston, and Sir Charles Coldstream; and this list could be greatly extended both as respects actresses and rôles from the time of Peg Woffington down to this generation.

The Sir Harry Wildair of Peg Woffington was the sensation of its day. Woffington made her London début, in the rôle of Farquhar's gay, good-humored rake, at Covent Garden in 1738, and her success was immediate and pronounced. The part soon became her stock character, and she represented it so admirably that during her lifetime she had no competitor in it. Even Garrick, who essayed the rôle early in his career, forever abandoned it to Woffington after he had once seen her, so impressed was he by her impersonation. On the other hand, however, when the actress attempted Lothario in Rowe's play "The Fair Penitent," another of Garrick's best rôles, she was not at all successful.

Dora Jordan, contemporary and rival of Siddons, was said to have

been very good in several male rôles. She played Lionel in "Lionel and Clarissa," Patrick in "The Poor Soldier," and Arionelli in "The Son-in-Law." She also attempted Sir Harry Wildair, and the impersonation, according to the testimony of her day, was very correct, but exceedingly tame and colorless as compared with that of Woffington. Yet on the whole she was probably quite as satisfactory in "breeches parts," as Leigh Hunt called them,—including Rosalind and Viola,—as in anything that she essayed.

Mrs. Centlivre, who died in 1723, better known as a dramatist than as an actress, frequently assumed male rôles. A contemporary notice of her death says that, "having a greater inclination to wear the breeches than the petticoat, she struck into men's parts." Mrs. Abingdon, contemporary with Garrick and Cibber, played Scrub on a wager at her benefit in 1786. Genest wrote of that performance, "She is said to have disgraced herself. Her portrait as Scrub, with hair dressed for Lady Racket, which she played in the after-piece, is absurd."

Isabel Dickinson, a dashing spirited English actress of half a century ago, was also inclined to masculinity on the stage. Her Sir Charles Coldstream, Claude Melnotte, and Tom Curry in "Eton Boy" were immensely popular. Miss Dickinson visited this country in 1848, making her New York début at Niblo's Theatre, in Astor Place, as Claude Melnotte, October 5 of that year. She was a tall, masculine woman, with good stage presence, and she enjoyed as high a degree of favor in New York as in London. Another somewhat famous Claude Melnotte of about the same date was Mrs. Melinda Jones, the first wife of the eccentric Count Johannes, and leading lady in support of Forrest, Macready, and other stars. Among the Paulines to her Claude were Anna Cora Mowatt, Jean Davenport, and Laura Addison, a clever English actress who was quite a favorite in the United States in the early fifties. The beautiful Felicia Vestvali, whose superb contralto voice was one of the wonders of the operatic stage a generation and more ago, was also an actress of repute, and played such male rôles as Henri de Lagerdère.

But, after all, strange as the case may appear, it is Shakespeare who has always been most alluring to women who have desired thus to unsex themselves in their dramatic art. The list of such actresses and of the male rôles that they have assumed is more important and possibly larger from the Shakespearian stage than from all others combined. Nor is it in the lighter comedy rôles that they have most sought fame. The leading heavy rôles of the tragedies they have more frequently chosen, as though they would annihilate at one bound the distinction between themselves and their male rivals.

Minor rôles, such as Sebastian in "Twelfth Night," the princes in "King John" and in "Richard III.," and some others, have always been played by women or young girls. Mrs. John Drew made her début on the American stage at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, September 26, 1827, when she was seven years of age, as the Duke of York, with the elder Booth in the title rôle of "Richard III." Among others on the English stage, Eliza O'Neill, who became Lady Beecher, also made her first appearance in the same part

when she was only twelve years old; and here in the United States Clara Fisher, afterwards Mrs. Maeder, played that and other similar male rôles, many of them in company with Mrs. John Drew. Over forty years ago Susan Denin and Kate Denin were well known to theatre-goers of this country in rôles of this character. They played together thus in "King John" and "Richard III.," and frequently appeared as the two Antipholi in "The Comedy of Errors." In Kean's production of "King John" in 1846 and subsequent years Mrs. Sutherland was the Prince Henry and Susan Denin the Prince Arthur. Such rôles as Rosalind and Viola may be dismissed with mere mention as somewhat outside the scope of the present inquiry, since their masculinity is merely a disguise, and not their real character.

Passing to the more important Shakespearian personages, we find that Hamlet and Romeo are the male rôles that have been most frequently essayed by women. Iago, Shylock, Macbeth, Richard III., Wolsey, Falstaff, Othello, and Marc Antony have also had their female impersonators. Twosome or more famous actresses have invaded this peculiar and unpromising field of dramatic effort.

Far and away at the head of her class undoubtedly stands Charlotte Cushman, the greatest female Romeo that the stage has ever known, and perhaps almost the only one clearly entitled to place in the same rank with the best male impersonations of the rôle. Miss Cushman stands quite alone among actresses as the only woman who ever made a Shakespearian male character one of the most important and most popular impersonations of her professional career and one in which she successfully challenged comparison on equal ground with the greatest tragedians. Miss Cushman always had great liking for male characters, and played them many in number and frequently in the early part of her career. During her second London season, in December, 1845, she appeared as Romeo at the Haymarket Theatre, with the special object in view of giving her sister Susan an opportunity to play Juliet. She had played Romeo before this time, but not to attract attention. On this occasion, however, her performance made her forever famous, and from that time forward some of her greatest stage triumphs were won as the hapless lover of Verona.

Scarcely second to her Romeo was Miss Cushman's Hamlet. She regarded it as a superior performance, but critics did not generally agree with her, although the impersonation was often cordially praised. Miss Emma Stebbins, her biographer, says, "The performance of Hamlet gave her great pleasure. She alludes to it in some of her letters as the very highest effort she has ever made, and the most exhausting: of all her parts this one seemed to fill out most completely the entire range of her powers."

The general consensus of opinion, however, seems to be that for complete abnegation of sex Miss Cushman's Cardinal Wolsey was pre-eminent in her own repertoire and unrivalled in that of any other woman. It was a magnificent piece of acting, which never failed to move her auditors to profoundest enthusiasm. It was felt by many that at the supreme points of the impersonation no actor or actress on the stage in her day could equal her. One writer said of her, "She

realized to our memory the palmy days of the drama, and made old play-goers recall the times of Cooke, Kean, and Macready." She had less liking for this than for other rôles, and that, perhaps, is the reason why she played it less frequently. According to Miss Stebbins, she confessed that she found it difficult to keep up to and above the other male parts in the play, so that Wolsey should dominate them all. The strength of her assumption is shown by her success on this point.

A catalogue of the women who have played Hamlet and Romeo, and a review of their performances, would make a long and interesting record. Miss Cushman's success inspired others to follow in her footsteps. For a time, among the leading women of that day, especially those who adhered to the Cushman school of acting, there was a craze to be a Shakespearian hero behind the footlights. Mrs. John Drew, Fanny Wallack (a cousin of Lester Wallack), Mrs. Melinda Jones, Susan Denin, Charlotte Crampton, Clara Ellis, Eliza Shaw, Miss Marriott, Kate Reignolds, Fanny Moran, Annie Clarke, Louise Pomeroy, Alice Placide Mann, Emma Waller, Charlotte Barnes, Kate Denin, Mrs. F. B. Conway, and Clara Fisher Maeder are names that are likely first to be recalled in this connection, though others might be added to the list. To go further back, Mrs. Scott Siddons tried Hamlet in 1782, but her success in the part was not sufficient to warrant her in continuing it in her répertoire.

To come to the consideration of those Shakespearian male rôles that have less frequently received the attention of women, there have been performances that were unique. In 1788 Mrs. Webb played Falstaff at Covent Garden. The chief merit of this performance, according to contemporaneous accounts of it, was in the fact that the lady filled Sir John's clothes without padding. "And Mrs. Battersby was foolish enough to personate Macbeth for her benefit," says Ireland, the veracious chronicler, and few will be found to dispute his conclusion. Mrs. Battersby, afterward Mrs. Stickney, was an actress of ability who achieved considerable success in England. She came out at the Park Theatre, New York, as Juliana, in "The Honeymoon," February 28, 1821, on which occasion she was deceptively advertised as making her "first appearance on any stage." Her appearance as Macbeth at the Park Theatre, June 25, 1823, was, of course, an unqualified failure.

Contemporaneous with Mrs. Battersby was Charlotte Baldwin, who, with her husband, Joseph Baldwin, and her sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. John Barnes, came from England and made her début at the old Park Theatre, New York, in April, 1816. Mr. Baldwin was an admirable comedian. He died in 1820. The widow remarried, her second husband being a man of wealth who was devoted to the drama, and with his money to draw upon she became manageress of the City Theatre, New York. Upon the occasion of her benefit, July 13, 1823, she appeared as Marc Antony in "Julius Cæsar," and also as Roxalana in the farce "The Sultan," an amusing contrast, and it was difficult to tell which impersonation was the more farcical. Mrs. Baldwin was a native of London, and, as Miss Simpson, had played in the English provinces and at the Haymarket and Drury Lane Theatres. She was a remarkably strong delineator of elderly females.

Her Nurse in "Romeo and Juliet," and her Duchess of York in "Richard III.," were greatly admired. Her second marriage was not happy, and the couple soon separated. Mrs. Baldwin grew very corpulent, and was obliged to retire from the stage in 1837. She died in 1856, at the age of seventy-eight.

Mrs. Charke, daughter of Theophilus Cibber, played a round of male parts at the Haymarket Theatre in the season of 1733-34. This was at the time when Cibber, who had been manager at the Drury Lane, had headed a revolt of the company at that theatre and gone over to the rival Haymarket. Among other rôles, Mrs. Charke assumed that of Roderigo in "Othello," but with indifferent success. Mrs. Henry Lewis, wife of Henry Lewis, a famous pantomimist in the thirties, played Macbeth, Richard III., and Othello. Richard III. was her great part, and some old play-goers will even now declare that she was equal to any of the tragedians in that rôle, an opinion that one will be justified in accepting only with liberal grains of salt.

Iago has enlisted the efforts of several actresses. In this country the most conspicuous female exponents of the rôle have been Mrs. Emma Waller and Miss Charlotte Crampton in the past, and Miss Marie Prescott in the present. Mrs. Waller, who is still living, was a contemporary and rival of Charlotte Cushman. She was great as Lady Macbeth, Queen Margaret, Queen Katherine, and Meg Merrilies, and by many was considered to be even superior to the more renowned tragédienne in those rôles. She played many male rôles, some of them satisfactorily, but none of them in a manner at all comparable with her impersonations of female characters. Macbeth, Hamlet, and Iago were her most interesting efforts in this class. In Iago she exhibited a fine comprehension of the character. Her reading of the lines was intelligent and strong in elocution, while her facial expression and stage movements were good. It was never quite possible, however, to forget the sex of the impersonator, and this feminine Iago was not a valuable addition to the stage.

Second only to Miss Cushman in her day, and by not a few competent judges considered to be even greater, Charlotte Crampton is now dimly remembered as an actress of exceptional power and remarkably effective in male rôles. Miss Crampton did not have an imposing figure, and her success in male rôles was therefore the more remarkable. She was only about five feet high, and was often called "The Little Sidons." But she had a fine form, a handsome, expressive face, and a wonderfully graceful carriage. She was a good swordsman, and few men cared to face her in combat on the stage. Macready used to say that she was the best Lady Macbeth that he ever knew, and she was a fine Medea. The male rôles that she favored were Ion, Jack Sheppard, Collin in "Nature and Philosophy," Carwin the Advocate in "The Orphan of Geneva," one of Forrest's great parts, and Don Cæsar de Bazan. From Shakespeare she played Richard III., Shylock, Macbeth, Hamlet, Iago, and Romeo. She was considered a remarkably strong Richard, and there were those who used to declare that her Shylock in the scene with Tybalt was one of the greatest pieces of acting seen in her generation. Miss Crampton came nearer to making us

oblivious of herself in her delineation of Iago. The same qualities of subtle analysis and masculinity that distinguished her Shylock and her Macbeth made her Iago noteworthy.

Miss Prescott's Iago is of to-day. It was brought out at the Windsor Theatre, New York, in February, 1890, and was played several times afterward. Without being wholly devoid of merit, the impersonation never rose to the point of being entitled to very serious consideration. Miss Prescott played the part intelligently and with care, and strength and fine shading were shown in her delivery of the lines. In her case, as in others, however, it was the femininity of the rôle that was most conspicuous and held the impersonation down to the commonplace.

Simply as a matter of record, and not in assertion of any remarkable artistic merit in the performance, reference should be made to the production of "As You Like It," under the auspices of The Woman's Professional League, at Palmer's Theatre, New York, November 21, 1893. On that occasion all the rôles, male and female, were played by women. Mme. Janaushek was Jaques, Mrs. E. A. Eberle, the Duke, Mrs. Ida Jeffries Goodfriend, Frederick, Mrs. Marguerite St. John, Le Beau, Miss Marion Abbott, Charles, Miss Olive Oliver, Oliver, Miss Roselle Knett, Jaques, Miss Maude Banks, Orlando, Mrs. Chambers Ketchum, Adam, Miss Kate Davis, Touchstone, Miss Sarah McVicker, Corin, Miss Grace Filkins, Silvius, and Miss Laura Burt, William.

But the climax of absurdity was capped when a Mrs. Macready undertook the portrayal of Shylock at the Academy of Music, New York, September 9, 1872. Mrs. Macready was one of that large army of misguided, stage-struck females whose powers are not commensurate with their ambitions. It is said that she was a teacher or a governess, and, having received a few lessons in dramatic art, started in to eclipse the great actresses of her day. She hired her own company, and made her début as Shylock. Of course she was a lugubrious failure. Her Shylock was stupid and tedious, and the actress displayed neither intellectual apprehension, stage-craft, nor elocutionary skill. After Shylock she tried the title rôle in Bulwer's "Richelieu," but with no higher degree of success. Then she started on a tour through the country, and never was heard from afterward. She went out of sight as suddenly and as mysteriously as she had appeared.

On the whole, the success of women in interpreting the male characters of the Shakespearian dramas has not been so pronounced as to hold out much inducement to others of the sex to follow in the footsteps of those who have been the pioneers. There seems to be no immediate danger that men will be supplanted in the privilege of depicting their sex before the foot-lights, and it is far from likely that the stage will ever have any female Keans, Kembles, Booths, or Forrests. The spirit of to-day, if not opposed to such experiments, is at least indifferent to them, on the part both of the public and of the profession. Even the remarkable activity that distinguished the Cushman epoch in this respect quite failed to maintain itself, and has exercised no deep or permanent influence. That episode, and others that preceded it, are now remembered only as curious pages in the history of the English-speaking stage.

Lyman Horace Weeks.

LONGFELLOW.

IF I were what I am not and never shall be, a writer of essays, personal or impersonal, there is one subject in which I am persuaded I could interest literary readers, and that is the impressions that men of genius have made on the minds of those who saw them for the first time. I should select authors in preference to other men of genius, and among them I would begin with poets, who have always had a strange fascination for me. I would take them when they were becoming conscious of their powers but were not too conscious of them; when they were young enough, simple enough, and natural enough to wonder at and enjoy their gifts, ingenuously, sincerely, and modestly.

I have known, more or less, most American poets who were worth knowing, beginning in my early years with youngsters of my own age, Taylor, Boker, Read, Stedman, and continuing, as the years went on, with Bryant, Lowell, and Longfellow; and among my scanty pleasures of memory the most precious in my eyes are those connected with the hours when the orbit of my life intersected theirs in a happy conjunction. I recall as if it were yesterday the day when I first met Taylor, and the night when, in Taylor's room, I first met Boker, and other nights and days when I first met Read and Stedman; but I am not so sure of the seasons when I first met the masters, whom I approached with more reverence and an apprehension that was more than trepidation. I never made a poetical pilgrimage in my life, and, judging from what I have heard from those who have made real pilgrimages, I never desired to. My meetings with my betters were always unpremeditated and unexpected ones,—I may say occasionally unwilling ones, for, knowing my deficiencies, I was fearful of intruding. That I need not have been, I learned after a time, for the older and greater the poet the more kind and considerate I found him.

I had two or three good friends in Boston in the old far-away days when I began to write verse,—the elder Ticknor, Whipple, Fields,—and I scarcely ever made a summer visit to that delightful little city (I speak of the Boston of forty years ago, remember) without being asked to join in their outings to Concord, or Cambridge, or Nahant. I was in Boston on one of these fairy visits towards the close of the forties, and, happening to drop in at the Old Corner Bookstore, which was a noted landmark then, I found Fields and Whipple behind a green baize curtain facing a window on School Street (but was it School Street?) and was invited to go with them to Nahant to see Longfellow. Gratified, as I should have been, but timid, as became one whose spurs were still to win, I pleaded an imaginary engagement, but was overruled: so we strolled to the station, and took the cars for Nahant. Where Nahant was I had, and have, no idea, except that it was on the sea-shore, and that the house which the poet and his family occupied was on high ground, near the crest of a bluff, I should say, facing the waves and a long line of breakers. The outlook seaward was fine, and, what with

the roar of the surf, and the cool fresh wind that blew shoreward, it was pleasant to be there. Longfellow was very courteous, frank and friendly in his manner and conversation, and, as we walked together along the springy turf on the edge of the bluff, he let me talk about poetry and question him, Fields and Whipple getting behind us to give me an opportunity to do so unchecked. "Mr. Longfellow," I said, "do you remember some lines in one of Mr. Bryant's early poems in which he compares a butterfly to a flower floating in the air?" He did not remember them, so I quoted from "After a Tempest:"

And from beneath the leaves that kept them dry
Flew many a glittering insect here and there,
And darted up and down the butterfly
That seemed a living blossom of the air.

"He was struck by them," Fields told me, at a later period, "and has booked them for use." Our walk over, we sauntered back to the house. I was introduced to Mrs. Longfellow. We sat down to dinner, and a general chat circulated around the table, Fields and Whipple discussing new books with the poet and social events with his wife, and I listening quietly, as was proper. They talked, among other things, about fantastic and foolish books, for which Longfellow had the fondness of a collector, and he quoted from one which he had recently procured, and in which the hero, whom we may suppose to have been a jailbird, bolted the door—and bolted himself. It reminded me, I said, of a passage I once read of an irate rustic, who, failing at a ball to obtain the hand of the lady with whom he wished to dance, a privilege that was granted to a rival, observed, "The two made a set, and I wanted to make a set-to." It was not a brilliant observation, but it was received with smiles as a maiden attempt at wit.

Whether the reputation of Longfellow remains at the high-water mark to which it rose during the early part of his life I have no means of knowing, for once a poet is dead and gone those who were loudest in his praise in his lifetime begin to hark back and question the faith that was in them, and his right to exercise the spell to which they submitted. If the supremacy of Byron was disputed, as we know it was, before he died, the popular estimation of Longfellow may well have changed in the ten years that have elapsed since his death. To read him, as I fancy most of the younger generation of his countrymen do, by the light of to-day alone, is to read the letter and not the spirit of his verse, which belongs to an earlier period than this. To measure him by the same standards as Tennyson, Browning, and Swinburne, is to measure him by standards which did not exist when he started on his poetic career, which was twelve or thirteen years before Swinburne was born, and when Browning and Tennyson were thumbing their school-books. He should be read by the glimmering twilight of American literature in the twenties and thirties of the century, when Bryant was the only poet and Irving the only prose writer who had attained distinction among us.

Longfellow began in his eighteenth year to write verse, which was published in the *United States Literary Gazette*, a weekly journal issued

in Boston, and, I believe, in New York also. It had one distinguished contributor, Bryant, and it is curious at this late day to read his poems and those of Longfellow, and note the qualities of each, and the influence of the elder poet over the younger, who clearly looked up to him as his master. Bryant's most notable contributions to the *Literary Gazette*, which began on April 1, 1824, and continued till March 1, 1825, were "Rizpah," "The Old Man's Funeral," "The Rivulet," "March," "Monument Mountain," "Summer Wind," "After a Tempest," "Autumn Woods," "Hymn to the North Star," and "Song of the Stars." We find in these early poems of his all, or nearly all, the elements in his later ones, his observation of and delight in nature, his sympathy with the poetic side of aboriginal life, and his habitual vein of serious reflection. There is not a word too much in them, nor a word too little; they are simple and compact, they are manly and mature. The contributions of Longfellow, which began on November 15, 1824, and ended on April 1, 1826, were immature, tentative, bookish, but undeniably promising. If they were imitative, the young poet was not conscious of the imitation, and the most that can fairly be said is that he was for the moment overshadowed by other poetic spirits,—by Bryant when he wrote "Woods in Winter," "An April Day," "Hymn of the Moravian Nuns," and "Sunrise on the Hills," and by Willis when he wrote "The Spirit of Poetry."

That a new poet was coming, if not already come, was the belief of the readers of Longfellow's verse in the *Literary Gazette*, who were better judges of the poetic outlook than we can be now. We cannot compare it, as they did, with the effusions of his forgotten contemporaries; if we could, we would be convinced of his superiority to the best of them,—to all of them, indeed, except Bryant. The literary condition of the country, which, if commonplace, was expectant, was favorable to the promise which was in him, and more than favorable to the promise which eight years later had ripened into performance, in his translation of the "Coplas de Manrique." We can read to-day, if we care to, all kinds of translations from all kinds of poets, not such colorless paraphrases as Pope's Homer, Dryden's Virgil, Fairfax's Tasso, Mickle's *Lusiad*, Cary's Dante, and so on, but translations, in the strict sense of the term, from the French, the Spanish, the Italian, the German, the Norwegian, the Arabic, the Persian, the Sanskrit,—in fact, from all languages and tongues and dialects in which poetry has been written and sung and said. It was otherwise with our American ancestors, to whom, sixty years ago, most literatures other than their own were a book shut up, a fountain sealed. Longfellow's translation of the "Coplas de Manrique" was the revelation to his countrymen of a noble poem, which must ever rank among the world's great funeral hymns, and the Essay which accompanied it introduced them to a knowledge of the moral and devotional poetry of Spain. To do this, as he did, was to add largely to their intellectual possessions.

Longfellow's second and third books were the fruits of two tours made by him in Europe in his early manhood, the first in order to fit himself as Professor of Modern Languages and Literature in Bowdoin

College, the last in order to increase his fitness for the same chair in Harvard College. They were in prose, and were entitled "Outre-Mer" (1835) and "Hyperion" (1839), one being a record of travel, the other a record, or romance, of scholarship, feeling, and meditation. Though I have not read either since boyhood, I retain pleasant recollections of both, "Outre-Mer," which used to stand on the same shelf of my small bookcase with Irving's "Sketch-Book," being the more vivid of the two. Certain English critics compare it with the "Sketch-Book,"—I could never see why; for Longfellow's style always seemed to me sweeter and mellowed than that of Irving, while his learning was larger and more recondite. More knowledge of more literatures than was apparent in "Outre-Mer" went to the making of "Hyperion,"—more sentiment, and more understanding of the emotional in life and character. To lovers of fiction of the simple poetic kind, particularly the younger ones, the story of Paul Flemming's love, as hinted at in "Hyperion," possessed an indefinable tender charm.

If the literary career of Longfellow had not been settled by the success of "Outre-Mer" and "Hyperion," and the certainty of his poetic powers confirmed by his translations therein, both were determined by "Voices of the Night," which was published in the same year as "Hyperion." The reputation of no modern poet was ever so surely made by his first collection of verse as that of Longfellow by "Voices of the Night." He was welcomed at once by all poetical readers, who found qualities in him that they found in no other poet, and was accepted by most critical readers, who, if they were not entirely satisfied with him, were tardy in expressing their dissatisfaction, the causes of which demanded an examination of canons that were new to them. It would not do to measure him by the standards they applied to Bryant, or Willis, or Halleck; and to condemn "A Psalm of Life," "The Beleaguered City," and "Midnight Mass for the Dying Year," because they were unlike "Thanatopsis," "The Widow of Nain," and "Marco Bozzaris," would simply be to attain the wish of Dogberry. There were many good reasons why "Voices of the Night" were so generally read and admired. They were all brief and intelligible, each illustrating a single theme, or a single train of thought, in well-chosen, melodious words. The range within which they were confined, and which was that of every-day life and emotion, was familiar to their readers, who were not obliged to go outside of themselves and their own experience to discover, or divine, the meaning of the poet. The despondent were cheered by him; the suffering were consoled. But there were other reasons why "Voices of the Night" were read and admired, and these were not so good. One of these reasons was a predominance of the commonplace in the selection of some of the subjects therein, and the way in which they were treated; another was an excess of imagery, rather studied than spontaneous; a third was a tendency to didactic statements which were neither novel nor important. These blemishes, which are so apparent to us, were not perceived by the first readers of "Voices of the Night," or, if perceived by them, were considered beauties. The world of poetical readers,

especially the world of American readers, was more impressed by didacticism fifty years ago than it is now, more tolerant of platitudes, more enamoured of tropes, figures, and metaphors.

"Voices of the Night" indicated the quality of Longfellow as surely as "Endymion" did the quality of Keats and "Poems chiefly Lyrical" that of Tennyson. This collection of verse differentiated him from his contemporaries, reflected the form and purpose of his thought, and foreshadowed what was to follow two years later in "Poems and Ballads." What it did not foreshadow, however, was the spirit of balladry which distinguished "The Skeleton in Armor" in this second collection, and which, if not new among us, as I believe it to have been, was never manifested so clearly, so strongly, so royally, before. "The Skeleton in Armor" had no prototype in American verse, and none in English verse, unless it were in the Norse ballads in Motherwell's "Poems Narrative and Lyrical" (1832), which may or may not have been reprinted before it was written. If Motherwell was the master of Longfellow, he was surpassed by his scholar in this noble poem, which was better than those long-drawn lays of his, in that it was shorter, more forcible, and more manageable in its wild and stormy music. The highest praise that can be given it is to say that it can be read with pleasure after Drayton's "Ballad of Agincourt." There was another and sweeter strain of balladry here in "The Village Blacksmith," which would have been perfect without the didactic application in the last stanza, and there was a vein of exquisite lyricism in "It is not always May" and "The Rainy Day."

In "The Belfry of Bruges and Other Poems" (1846) the old-time picturesqueness of the Netherlands was transported to the homely shores of New England; the longing of the world for peace found a voice in "The Arsenal at Springfield," and the starry mysteries of the heavens were revealed in "The Occultation of Orion." The light and life of song sparkled and shone and danced in "Seaweed," "Afternoon in February," and "The Arrow and the Song." The poetry and pathos of feeling were radiant in "A Gleam of Sunshine," "The Bridge," and "The Old Clock on the Stairs." There was in Longfellow's next collection, "The Seaside and the Fireside" (1850), a larger scope in the selection of subjects, with a greater dexterity in their handling. "The Building of the Ship," for example, was better every way than Schiller's "Song of the Bell," and the perfection of romantic balladry was attained in "The Secret of the Sea" and "Sir Humphrey Gilbert." Never was the heart touched by a tenderer lyric than "The Open Window," and never the vanished life of the East more vividly restored than in "Sand of the Desert in an Hour-Glass."

But before "The Seaside and the Fireside" Longfellow published "Evangeline" (1847), and in a few years after it "The Golden Legend" (1854), and "The Song of Hiawatha" (1855), which, unlike the volumes that preceded them, were not what the old poets called "poems on several occasions," but the first a poetic narrative, the second a mediæval romance-drama, and the third a primitive aboriginal epic. Compared with his younger self, the Longfellow of these elaborate works was *alter et idem*,—the same in his method of writing, which was

more mature, but another in the objects aimed at, which were larger. If he outgrew anything, it was the didacticism of his early period: what he did not outgrow was his fondness for fancies, his love for imagery, his passion for ornamentation, and his determination to see resemblances which no one else saw, forcing correspondences which did not exist, reversing the "pathetic fallacy" of some of his contemporaries, who compelled nature to reflect their moods, while he compelled his moods to reflect nature. We have a striking instance of this perverse ingenuity in "The Beleaguered City" in "Voices of the Night," and a more striking one in the "Carillon" of "The Belfry of Bruges," material objects being introduced into both for the sake of spiritual significances that could be attached to them, the Moldau and its army of dead in the first representing the River of Life and the phantoms that beleaguer the soul, the wild chimes in the second representing the airy rhymes of the poet, and so on. But the most striking instance of all is "Seaweed," the eight stanzas of which are a series of doubles, and nothing else except fluent words of the most exquisite melody. Longfellow was long suspected of borrowing this singularity in poetic conception from some German poet, but wrongfully suspected, for the trick was his own invention, and was first used by him in a lyric in the *Literary Gazette* for November 15, 1825. It was entitled "Musings," and described what a young poet might be supposed to feel as he sat by his window at night and watched the moon shining on the roofs of the town, the haze coming over the lowlands, and the stir of life growing still:

Then I watched from my window how fast
The lights all around me fled,
As the wearied man to his slumber passed
And the sick one to his bed.

All faded save one, that burned
With distant and steady light;
But that, too, went out—and I turned
Where my own lamp within shone bright.

Thus, thought I, our joys must die,
Yes—the brightest from earth we win;
Till each turns away with a sigh
To the lamp that burns brightly within.

I met Longfellow two or three times after my visit to Nahant, twice, I think, at the Old Corner Bookstore, and once in his own home at Cambridge, where, with several elderly men of letters, I dined with him. Of these meetings I have no remembrance that will bear transference to paper, except that they were very pleasant and that I was on better terms with myself than before they occurred. It is not so much what an old man says to a young man that encourages him as what the old man himself is to the young man. Words are one thing, manner is another, and the manner of Longfellow was the perfection of courtesy, kindness, and sincerity.

I have been looking over Longfellow's letters to me, and cursing

the folly which led me to sacrifice so many to the importunities of the Autograph Fiend, who is probably a descendant of one of the daughters of the horse-leech mentioned in Scripture. The earliest of the few that have escaped him is dated November 14, 1871, and refers to a young Englishman, or Irishman, or Irish-Englishman, whom he commended to my consideration. He had not the pleasure of his personal acquaintance, he wrote, but he had brought him a letter of introduction from Lady Dalling and Bulwer, and he was anxious to forward his plans. He wished to write for the periodicals, and he asked from me a kindly hearing for him. I was editing a periodical at the time, and I gave him a kindly hearing. He was not a prepossessing person, though I tried to think he was, for I saw by his dress that he was poor, and there was an air of humility about him that appealed to my sympathy. He is a stranger in a strange land, I reasoned, and he feels his forlorn condition here as I should if I were in London under similar circumstances. I asked him what he had written, and he produced a packet of cuttings from English magazines, some in verse, which I saw at a glance was fairish, and some in prose, which I was about to read when I saw they were portions of Mrs. Gaskell's "*Cranford*." My wife, who was sitting by, called attention to the fact. He colored, and said his brother, who had sent the packet to him, must have made it up hurriedly and mixed with his work the work of others: he ought to have looked it over carefully himself and selected his own writings from the rest. We let his explanation pass for what it was worth, and he soon departed, with a promise on his part to write me a story at once. After a few days he produced a story, which I read and accepted. It was called "*The Blue Boy*," and when I handed him what he called the honorarium he told me that the idea of it came to him the night before, on seeing his landlady's little boy clad in a suit of blue clothes. I did not quite see how the story could grow out of that circumstance, but, as I was not a writer of stories, I concluded not to show my ignorance. He called on me again a few nights later, and managed, when he departed, to leave a fine new overcoat in my room, where it remained a week or more. I surmised, afterwards, that he had conveyed it from the hall-way of some house where he had called, and made me his receiver for the time being. My surmise may have wronged him, but I hardly think so, for before long I found the story I had purchased from him in an old volume of *Littell's Living Age*. If I had been a severe moralist I would have exposed him to Longfellow, but, knowing that the exposure would pain him deeply and seriously injure his *protégé*, I had not the heart to do so. He might safely be trusted to injure himself without my aid; and he did, for before many months were over he was detected mutilating books at the Astor Library. He was mercifully let off, and returned to England, where, in the course of time, his talent for fiction burgeoned into a historical romance.

In the next letter that I have retained, Longfellow refers to some suggestions that I made regarding "*Poems of Places*," which he was then editing, and other things which I must have added thereto in the note that I wrote to him:

"CAMB., Jan. 8, 1878.

"DEAR MR. STODDARD,—

"Please accept my thanks for your kind letter, for the poems you send me, and those you refer to in Griswold.

"I have not his 'Female Poets' at hand, but shall lose no time in getting a copy, and examining the poems you mention.

"Your tribute to Lincoln is beautiful and very just. I will keep it carefully out of sight till it appears in the magazine.

"As to your estimate of Mrs. Stoddard's literary abilities, I do not wonder at it. You do not rate them a bit too highly; and if her writings have not found that swift recognition which they merit, I hope it will not discourage her. Often the best things win their way slowly, but they are pretty sure of being found out sooner or later.

"Some of your volumes I have. The rest I shall find in the libraries here or in Boston. I thank you for pointing out the pieces that will be of use to me. I have frequently been obliged to omit poems of merit because I could not ascertain their localities.

"I was very glad to renew my acquaintance with you at the pleasant *Atlantic* dinner, and am, with great regard,

"Yours very kindly,

"HENRY W. LONGFELLOW."

I find by the next letter that I sent Longfellow a set of Griswold's books, which I had recently re-edited with additions:

"CAMB., Jan. 14, 1878.

"DEAR MR. STODDARD,—

"The three handsome volumes of Griswold have arrived safely, and I hasten to thank you for your great kindness in sending them to me. Though I have not had time to examine them carefully, yet I have glanced at them here and there, and see that they will be of much use to me.

"I wish I had possessed a copy of the 'Female Poets' sooner. I should not then have missed those three striking poems by Mrs. Stoddard, 'The Bull-Fight,' 'El Capitano,' and 'On the Campagna,' whose absence in 'Poems of Places' I much regret.

"With many thanks for your careful kindness,

"Yours very kindly,

"HENRY W. LONGFELLOW."

In the spring of 1878 I was asked to write a paper on Longfellow for one of our magazines, and, not being certain in my own mind as to the accuracy of several statements in the received biographies, I put myself in communication with him. Here is his reply:

"CAMB., April 20, 1878.

"DEAR MR. STODDARD,—

"In the 'Homes of American Authors,' published by Putnam of your city in 1853, you will find on page 265 a view of the house in which I was born. It is still standing, overlooking the harbor, as you see in the picture.

"Before I was two years old the family removed to a house in the centre of the town. Of this house, where my childhood was passed, I send you a photograph. The upper room in the left-hand corner, with the open windows, was mine.

"I am glad you are going to take the trouble of writing the sketch for *Scribner*. If there is to be any biography in it, please state that the family came from Yorkshire, not from Hampshire, as usually stated, and that my first wife died at Rotterdam, and not at Heidelberg.

"This is perhaps of no great importance, but, generally speaking, fact is better in history than fiction.

"Any other doubtful points I shall be happy to settle for you, if you will put them in the form of questions.

"You must greatly miss your friend Taylor. Still, I rejoice in his appointment. He will fill the place better than any other man.

"Yours very kindly,

"HENRY W. LONGFELLOW."

I omit two or three notes which touch upon "Poems of Places," and give an extract from a later one which was dated on May 19. "Accept my thanks," Longfellow wrote, "for your generous notice of 'Keramos' in the *Independent*, which I have read with pride and pleasure. I am never indifferent, and never pretend to be, to what people say of my books. They are my children, and I like to have them liked. When I send you the volume of 'Poems of Places' containing China, which I will do as soon as it is published, I hope you will not think I have taken too many of your 'Chinese Songs.'"

The next letter from Longfellow, and the last I shall quote, refers to a poem which I read before the young gentlemen of Harvard. He came to hear me, but, as I preceded the orator, I missed the honor that he paid me, for I did not see him, though my wife caught a glimpse of him as he stole into Sanders's Theatre. Here is what he wrote:

"CAMB., June 30, 1878.

"DEAR MR. STODDARD,—

"I was very sorry and much disappointed not to see you and Mrs. Stoddard when you were here last week. But it was such a busy week that I could not go to town in search of you, and probably should not have found you if I had gone.

"I failed also to hear you deliver your poem. Being delayed by visitors, and thinking the poem would follow the oration, I arrived too late.

"The next thing to hearing the poem is reading it. Thanks for the opportunity of doing so thus early. It is both vigorous and beautiful. The warlike ages you have described with a tumult of verse finely adapted to the theme.

"Fifty years ago, before the same Society, Bryant recited his poem 'The Ages' in Spenserian stanzas. On the year of his death you take up the theme once more, and paint an Historic Picture in the same metre. Was it accident or design? I know not, but, whichever it was, the idea is very felicitous. I congratulate you on your success.

"I was glad to see Mr. Gifford. He made some capital sketches, with which I think you will be pleased.

"Yours very kindly,

"HENRY W. LONGFELLOW."

To have followed in the footsteps of Bryant, and to have been praised by Longfellow, is to have pleasant memories.

Richard Henry Stoddard.

THE WAY OF A WILL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MY STRANGE PATIENT," ETC.

I.

SHE had said it. And he had believed her. All,—with a tremendous emphasis on the comprehensive little word,—all was over between them. It was as if the door of hope had closed, and crape was hanging from the knob in mourning for his romance so cruelly done to death.

Roger Golden, victim of despondency, sulked in his room under the eaves of the boarding-house, and would not be comforted. He was young, and this first great trouble overwhelmed him. Seven long days had worn away since she had spoken, without dulling the keenness of the blow she had inflicted. In that dreary week his face had grown haggard, his dress careless; business hours had been more than ever a farce in the six-by-ten room in a tall building down town which he called his office. The rare client seeking an architect's advice might have knocked on its door in vain; for, even had he gained admission, in the few minutes in each day during which its tenant occupied the place, it would have been but to be bidden to take himself and his need of plans and specifications elsewhere. There was little of the money-maker in Golden, and at this time dollars seemed to him hardly worth the seeking, even though it was to his lack of sufficient store of them that his woe might be traced. She was not mercenary,—so much he realized,—but she understood the cash requirements of love in a modern cottage and the great truth that steady inroads upon a modest capital do not open the way to prolonged marital bliss. Again and again had she, speaking not from the wisdom of a prophetess, but, as he suspected, from that of her father, urged him to cultivate the painful virtues of prudence, thrift, and economy, and as often had he laughed at her warnings, as was natural enough; for from the beginning of things the song of the siren has been of joyous idleness, or it has been sung to deaf ears. And then the climax had come. A diamond ring which had captivated his fancy had charmed her eye, but startled her common sense. She had rejected not only the gift but the giver, not with the haste of impulse, which generally spreads the carpet for contrition to walk upon, but with the gently inexorable deliberateness of well-grounded conviction, which hardly knows the risk of self-reproach.

Perceiving which, he had gone away sorrowful, and sorrow had been his portion ever since.

Golden, wasting an afternoon in staring at the month-old ashes in his grate and finding in them a sort of dumb fellowship of calamity, was not a pretty picture. Nor was he good to look upon when he fell to pacing the floor with almost the energy to be expected in a life-prisoner who, anxious for death, is ordered to daily exercise to maintain his health. After a little, however, the slow tramp up and down the room ceased. Picking up a book at random from half a dozen on his table, he threw himself into a chair and tried to read. It seemed at first that he could not have made a poorer selection than the compendium of legal forms which chance had put in his way. He turned the leaves mechanically, glancing at a line or two here and there. Suddenly something caught his eye. He read the page from beginning to end, smiling with grim approval not so much of the phraseology of the paragraphs before him as of a plan which they suggested. He took a long sheet of paper from his desk and wrote carefully, beginning with "In the name of God, Amen," and continuing, with frequent references to the book, until he had covered the paper to within an inch of the lower margin. So much accomplished, he pushed an electric button: in a few minutes a servant appeared.

"Please ask Mrs. Mack to come here," said he, "and come yourself, Norah."

Presently the landlady bustled into the room, with the maid in her wake. Golden added his name to the document on the table, requesting them to witness the signature. This they did in rather awe-stricken fashion, subscribing themselves slowly, and going back to touch up a letter or two where the ink had not flowed freely from the pen. Then they tiptoed out, with the solemnity of the occasion still upon them. The young man looked at his watch.

"Four-forty," he reflected: "an hour and a half more of the afternoon. I'll go out: can't stand this place any longer."

Evening had come on when he returned from his ramble, and most of his fellow-boarders had dined. It pleased him to have a table to himself, and, with an appetite slightly sharpened by his stroll, he made a better meal than had been his custom for the last few days. As he rose from his seat the maid brought him a telegram, handling it gingerly, as a thing of fateful possibilities.

"Just come, sor," she explained. "The bye's waitin'."

Stepping into the hall, Golden opened the yellow envelope and ran his eye over the message:

"If possible, come to me at once. Don't delay. My days are numbered.

"RICHARD CREIGH."

"I'm off to-night," was the answer Golden scribbled on a blank produced from the messenger's pocket. Then he dashed up the stairs to his room, jammed into a small valise a few articles necessary for a journey, and, picking up his hat and a light overcoat, started for the

door. There he paused irresolutely, and turned back to take from a drawer of the desk the document which he had prepared a few hours earlier, and to enclose it in an envelope upon which he placed his name and above it the words "Please hold for." This envelope he thrust within a second, upon which he wrote "John Henry Burnett, The Maharajah, City," and decorated with a postage-stamp. A little later, as he hurried along the street to the nearest cab-stand, he dropped the letter in a corner mail-box. He had two miles to cover in order to reach the railway station, and his time was brief. The cabman's face lengthened when he heard his prospective passenger's demand.

"There's just one way ye can make it, mebbe," he declared. "That's by walkin' the railroad bridge from this side of the river—if ye das't try it."

"All right," cried Golden. "Get me to the bridge, then, as fast as your horse can travel."

After ten minutes of rattling over rough pavements, swift dodging along crowded thoroughfares, and break-neck driving down quiet side streets, the cab pulled up on the edge of a net-work of tracks, dotted with many switch-lights and busy in places with the making up of trains. To the right the shadowy outlines of the bridge showed the path which Golden had to follow. There were signal lights about the structure, but they were high above the ground and too faint to lessen the darkness below them. At its beginning, at least, the passage promised to be nerve-trying, especially to one who knew of the hundred feet intervening between the bridge and the surface of the river.

"Hustle, an' you can make it, mister," said the cabman, bending down to consult his watch by the beams of his vehicle's lamps. "You've got five minutes good. Keep to the left hand, so's nothin' 'ull be buttin' into you before you see it. An' if the watchman yells at you, don't stop for him: he's old, and he won't chase you."

Golden hurried toward the bridge, with as much speed as was advisable in the midst of the maze of rails. The watchman must have been off guard, for the young man neither heard nor saw anything of him, and he was fairly upon the bridge when a husky voice sounded almost at his elbow:

"I shay, ol' fellow, goin' crosh? Letsh go together. Hol' each other up, you know. What shay?"

"Can't stop for you," Golden answered. The person who had addressed him rose unsteadily from a resting-place on the end of the ties, and made a hopeless attempt to catch the other's arm. Golden could hear him shouting uncomplimentary things concerning unsociable folk, long after he had passed the fellow. The thought came to him that the bridge was a choicely dangerous spot for an inebriate, but it did not occur to him to turn back. No doubt the clamor the man was raising would bring out the watchman, who would lead him out of harm's way. Meanwhile, the business of keeping his own footing gave Roger slight chance to worry about a stranger's predicament. Two lines of planks laid side by side made a foot-path sufficiently broad for use by daylight, but unpleasantly scanty in the darkness. Fortunately for him, his head was clear, and he had had some practice in traversing

beams, and so, though now and then his heart seemed to pop into his throat as he advanced into some stretch of particular blackness, he was able to make steady and almost rapid progress. He was nearing the end of the bridge, when his toe caught on a projecting spike and for an instant he lost his footing. He did not fall, but in the effort to regain his balance he dropped his valise, which vanished noiselessly between two of the big steel supports and plunged into the river. Its loss was annoying, but not serious, and, thankful on the whole to have avoided a worse mishap, he at last reached solid ground, and by dint of a hard spurt of a hundred yards or more caught his train, with a margin of a few seconds to spare. Again he crossed the bridge, but this time in comfort and ease, and soon was speeding away from the city in which, as he believed, he had experienced the extremes of happiness and sorrow.

II.

The afternoon was well advanced, and a cool breeze was blowing through the open windows of the sick-room, at one of which Golden stood with a patent pretence of interest in the bit of hill-country landscape visible to him. Near another window, propped up on a lounge, lay the invalid, a tall man, sunken-eyed, hollow-cheeked, and with a face whose ghastly pallor was accentuated by a month's growth of dark beard. Beside him sat a little man, round-bodied and round-faced. The two had been conferring long and earnestly, but their task was nearly completed. Presently the little man rose, shook hands with the invalid, and crossed to Golden.

"I bid you good-day, suh," he said, cheerily. "I hope I may have the honah soon to know you bettah, suh." Then, in a lower tone, "Everything is arranged, the papahs are signed, witnessed, and legally perfect. And now, suh, I must wish you a very good evening."

Golden watched him make his way to the road, mount his horse, and canter off toward the town at the far end of the valley. Steed and rider were disappearing in a little cloud of dust, when the sick man broke the silence in the room.

"Roger—no, I mean Richard," he said. "Ah, it is not easy to remember the name, even though I am your godfather. I want to talk to you."

The young man took the chair beside the lounge.

"Don't overtax your strength," he urged. "Better try to rest. Isn't it time for the medicine?"

"Not yet. Besides, the medicine does no good. And as for my strength, I'd better use it while there's any of it left. After all, it doesn't matter now how quickly it goes. I've accomplished that upon which my heart was set. I may die to-night, but the name will live. You'll bear it, I dare say, far more worthily than I have. It's a good old name, and I've been proud of it, as I want you to be proud of it. You can't comprehend what it meant to me to hear the judge, by virtue of the authority vested in him by the Commonwealth, declare you Richard Creigh; for then I knew that the property would pass

directly to one of my name. And I pray the money may be of greater use to you than it has been to me. You'll have to go to London to complete the deal with the syndicate for the coal lands, but after that you'll be free to turn whither you please. Probating the will will be a simple matter; the judge will attend to that. He took it away with him just now, almost before the ink on the signature had dried. You've plans, I suppose. Will you stick to your profession?"

"Perhaps, but not in the old place."

"Then you don't like that city?"

"I hate it."

"Why, I had thought——"

"Yes, I know. I did fancy it tremendously until—well, until I met a terrible disappointment. Life seemed very bitter after that, and when I came here and found you, the only real friend that was left, so
—so ill——"

"Dying," said the other, quietly.

"Then—you'll understand me—I can't tell you how I felt, what I felt."

"Yes, I understand."

A thin weak hand and a sturdy one came together in a clasp more eloquent than any speech to the two friends so soon to part forever. There was silence for a time, and then the older man said, softly, almost as if the words were for no ears but his own,—

"A week at the most; probably less. That was the limit the doctor gave me to-day."

III.

The city was simmering through a hot August afternoon, broiling like a lobster in its shell, with not enough life left to wriggle under torture. Even the depths of the dark halls of its great buildings offered little relief from the pervading heat, while the rooms opening from them were as ovens or as fire-boxes, according to the directness with which the sun beat upon their walls. In a darkened apartment of the "Maharajah" Mr. John Henry Burnett was striving for coolness with the aid of a fan and a wicker lounge placed just where the chance of encountering a stray breeze was most favorable, and against the formidable odds of a tall collar and a tightly-buttoned waistcoat. His coat was off, but this was the sole concession Mr. Burnett would make to the temperature. His collar and waistcoat were not matters of religion with him, but they were matters of habit. He was tall and angular, with a long face, a high nose, and a square jaw. Every inch of him expressed respectability, as befitted probably the most severely reputable resident of the city, a person who from his youth up had made it a study to follow only the well-beaten paths of established custom. There were those who ascribed his conservatism to a consciousness of stupidity, and avowed that he made no ventures because he foresaw inevitable blunders; but such critics were prejudiced. To his admirers he was a model of all that was desirable in daily walk and conversation, an oracle of the safely commonplace.

A rigid youth in buttons brought in a card. Mr. Burnett, rising reluctantly from his couch, laid down his fan and picked the card from the tray. As he read the name upon it his face lighted up.

"Show him in," he commanded, seizing his coat and thrusting his arms into the sleeves with more haste than he often displayed. He was posed very effectively with the card between the thumb and forefinger of his left hand, when the door opened, and a young man entered the room.

"Howdy, Burnett?" the visitor exclaimed. "How in the world do you keep so comfortable? This room's the coolest place I've found in this town. How are you, anyway?"

He advanced with outstretched hand, but the master of the coolest room in the town retreated in hot haste to a window, throwing open the blind in reckless disregard of the light and heat which poured in.

"What's the matter?" demanded the other. "Don't you recognize me? What are you running away for? I'm warranted not to bite, even in the dog-days."

"Roger Golden!" gasped Burnett. "Where did you come from? Whose card is this?"

"Oh, it's mine. I supposed you'd heard of my change of name: I'm Richard Creigh now."

"Who?"

"Richard Creigh. By virtue of an order of court I bear the name of the best man I ever knew. But what ails you, Burnett? You look as if you'd seen a ghost."

Burnett advanced from the window and stiffly extended a hand to his visitor. A habit of observing the courtesies of life stood him in good stead, enabling him to do the proper thing even if it was done mechanically. When he took a seat, however, he contrived to have a desk between himself and his caller.

"Pardon me," said he, with an effort to regain his normal heavy suavity, "pardon me, but this is most extraordinary,—your reappearance, you know."

"I don't know why it should be," rejoined the younger man. "It's natural enough to return after going away, isn't it? I was summoned to the side of an old friend who was very ill, and of course I started at once. I found him dying in an old house on some coal lands he owned down South. He had no kith nor kin, and he desired me to take his name. As my own meant very little to me, I acquiesced. Now I've come back here for a day or two. What is there in that proceeding to make you—if it were anybody else than you, I'd say hysterical?"

Burnett cleared his throat with a nervous little cough.

"The unusual feature of your return," said he, slowly, "is that I attended your funeral about two months ago."

"My funeral? That's a poor sort of joke."

"I am not given to jokes," said Burnett, stiffly. "So far as I perceived at the time, it was conducted in due form, although, from your presence here, I now judge that some er—er—irregularity must have crept into it."

"Apparently so. I wish you'd explain yourself."

"You—pardon me if I use the pronoun in this connection—you were struck by a train on the bridge and hurled into the river. Your body was picked up a week later on a sand-bar ten miles below the city. The coroner and a jury held an investigation, giving a verdict in accordance with the facts, and your acquaintances saw to it that you were laid to rest with fitting ceremonies."

"Oh, come," said Creigh, impatiently, "you don't ask me to believe that such a blunder was perpetrated, do you? Who identified the body?"

"A number of your friends."

"But how could they have made the mistake? Surely they must have forgotten my features very quickly."

"You don't understand the circumstances. When a man is hit by a locomotive and tossed into a stream where he remains for so many days, he isn't identified by his face. Perhaps you'd get a clearer idea from the newspaper accounts. I have all the clippings."

Burnett took a bundle of printed slips from the desk and passed them to his companion.

"Halloo!" said Creigh, looking up from the first which met his eye, "they found my valise in the river, did they?"

"Yes; it was regarded as important evidence at the inquest."

Creigh nodded, and read on. Presently he said, "So there was a rival claimant, was there? She seems to have been looking for a missing husband, to have been cocksure that she had found him, and to have said so very distinctly."

"It was terrible," said Burnett, with a shudder at the recollection. "The newspapers called it a scene. She was not a lady."

"And she was at the funeral?"

"Yes, and insisted upon having a front pew. It was most distressing."

"I believe you," said Creigh, dryly. Then, after another interval devoted to scanning the slips, "My will is mentioned here: so you opened the envelope which I enclosed in another and addressed to you?"

"I did, after mature deliberation. The inner envelope was inscribed 'Please hold for Roger Golden.' When your fate appeared to be certain I broke the seal, and found in the contents what seemed to be the crowning evidence needed to end all doubt."

"Was there any talk of suicide?"

"Some; but I assure you I did my best to refute the idea. The whole case is generally regarded as an accident."

"I should think it would be. Persons contemplating self-destruction don't, as a rule, pack valises for the trip to another world."

"So I pointed out. The will, of course, gave rise to gossip, but I tried to explain your making it upon the ground of a premonition of your fate."

"What's this?" demanded the other, sharply. "Here's a hint of 'blighted affections' in this paper. What started that?"

"Well, you know, the reporters always put in something of the kind, if there's the least excuse. But I stopped them right there."

They're not bad fellows at heart, and when a fair statement of the facts was laid before them they agreed, for the sake of the young lady, to go no further."

"Then her name was not dragged in?"

"N-o; not in the papers."

"But there was talk about her?"

"Only among those who knew you both. It's very painful, I'm sure, but how could it have been avoided? People couldn't help noticing that, though she hasn't been in mourning, she doesn't go about at all. She's retired so completely that nobody has seen her for weeks. I happened to hear the other day that she hasn't even gone out of town, in spite of the terrible weather."

Creigh offered no response to this bit of information, but evidently it gave him cause for thought. So long was he silently devoted to his cogitations that Burnett, after many uneasy shifts of position, was at last forced to say something.

"This whole matter is most extraordinary," he declared. "The testimony of the cabman that he saw you start over the bridge, the finding of your valise and then of the body in the river, the discovery that you had hastily drawn up a will just previous to your departure, the statements of the people at your boarding-house that you had received a telegram which seemed to agitate you greatly and that you left the house without telling them whither you were bound,—the case appeared to be clear enough."

"So I should imagine from the results."

"Why didn't you write to us, to me, to anybody here?" queried Burnett. "Even a postal card would have prevented the chain of mistakes."

"It didn't occur to me to write," Creigh confessed. "I didn't suppose anybody would have sufficient interest in me to care to hear, unless possibly Mrs. Mack might become anxious about the rent of my room. But I didn't send her any word: I heartily wish I had."

"Yes," the other chimed in, "it would have saved trouble. As it is, the situation is extremely awkward—for you, I mean."

"For me? I don't see why. I'm alive instead of being dead,—that's all."

"But, my dear fellow, think of the scandal."

"Scandal? Wherein is it worse for a man supposed to be dead to be living, than for a dead man to be supposed to be alive?"

"Ah, you don't comprehend your real position," said Burnett, impressively. "Legally you are dead and buried: the books of the coroner and the cemetery prove so much. You can have your legal life restored,—at least I suppose you can,—but there will have to be court proceedings, and all kinds of complications, and the newspapers will make your name a jest and a byword, and all that sort of thing. That's what I meant by scandal. Just consider how trying it will be for everybody concerned."

The elder man mopped his brow with his handkerchief. Before him rose visions of the room in which the inquest had been held; of himself in the witness-chair declaring emphatically that the body taken

from the river was that of his friend; of a wild-eyed woman pushing toward him and shrieking that he was trying to rob her of her dead; of a jury, impressed by his pre-eminent respectability, accepting his statements and bidding his hysterical rival go her way; visions of a funeral where he had taken the place of chief mourner; other visions of meetings with reporters at which he had given to the world his theories of Golden's fate, and of confidential chats with intimates to whom he had retailed the curious features of the young man's will. All through the investigation Mr. Burnett had been the leader, twisting facts to fit his theory; and now before him was living proof that he, the most conservative and careful of men, had made of himself a most egregious ass. If the story became public property he would have to flee the city: the newspapers would grow merry at his expense; the children would jeer at him as he walked the streets; his associates would gloat openly over the downfall of his infallibility; and that woman—better exile in a desert than the risk of falling into her avenging clutches. He had reason to dwell with emphasis upon the "scandal" involved in the young man's reappearance.

"A drunken chap hailed me on the bridge," said Creigh, reflectively. "Probably he was the victim. I'd see the widow, and tell her what I think, if only there was time. But I must leave the city speedily. I'm going to Europe."

"A good plan,—a very good plan," cried the other, with inhospitable heartiness. "You'll enjoy the ocean trip immensely; most pleasant at this season."

"Glad to hear it. But first I'll have to attend to some matters here, give up my room and office, and so on. By the bye, I'd like that will of mine."

Burnett turned again to the desk from which he had produced the newspaper clippings, and brought to light a document which he fingered nervously for a moment before he passed it to its owner.

"There's an explanation necessary," said he. "This is a copy. I've been forced to make some use of the original. After your—that is, after the coroner's verdict, a shyster, who had heard that you had left a little property and who conjectured that you'd—well, that you'd died intestate, applied to the probate court to be appointed your administrator. Getting wind of his scheme, I balked it, but to do that I had to file the will with the court. It would take too long to describe all the proceedings, but you have the substance of the story. Since then I've been trying vainly to communicate with the executor you named. I've sent half a dozen letters to as many addresses, but without result. Nobody seemed to know where Richard Creigh was to be found. I say, though, Roger,—Mr. Creigh, I mean,—here's a queer complication!"

Burnett paused, as if uncertain how to frame the next sentence.

"Well, what is it?" the other asked, with the patience of one to whom a fresh tangle made very little difference.

"Why, you made Richard Creigh your executor."

"Certainly: he was my closest friend, and I supposed him likely to outlive me."

"And now you yourself are Richard Creigh."

"No doubt that is the only name to which I now have a legal right," the young man admitted. "But it won't be difficult to explain how——"

"Explain!" Burnett broke in. "Don't you see the point? Explanations will involve publicity, talk, gossip, scandal. That's precisely the point you fail to appreciate."

"If I hadn't lost my head," said the visitor, regretfully, "I wouldn't have forgotten that I'd named him as executor. But the news that he was so ill fairly carried me off my feet. All I thought of when his message came was to get to him without a moment's delay. Still, what great difference does it make? He was Richard Creigh then; I'm Richard Creigh now. Besides, as I'm alive, my will doesn't count."

"Maybe not; but remember the coroner's verdict: it's a matter of record."

"Oh, bother the record!" cried the young man. "Here's another to offset yours. Here's the certificate, or whatever they call it, given me by the judge who granted my petition for a change of names. Read it and be convinced."

He tossed a folded paper to Burnett, who, opening it with considerable curiosity, perused it from beginning to end. There was a new light in his eye as he looked up.

"What's the date of the will?" he asked.

"May the twenty-fifth. Hadn't you noticed it?"

"Yes, I had noticed it," said Burnett, dryly. "That is just why I spoke,—in order to call your attention to the fact. You see, this certificate, too, is dated the twenty-fifth of May."

Creigh rose and snatched the paper from his senior's hand.

"Duce take the careless judge, so it is!" he cried. "It's a mistake, of course. He wrote 'May' instead of 'June,'—that's all."

"Quite enough to make you a lot of trouble," quoth Burnett, oracularly. "Tell me, though, at what hour of the day was this thing signed?"

"Between three and four o'clock in the afternoon."

"And your will?"

"About half-past four, as I remember."

"Indeed!" said Burnett, with vast meaning. "If I'm not mistaken, central time, which is an hour later than our eastern time, prevails in the region where you dropped the Roger Golden."

"What if it does?"

"Merely that, on the face of the records, nobody can tell whether your will or the certificate was signed first. Going still by the records, my boy, so nearly as I can make out, it's a pretty question whether you haven't appointed yourself your own executor."

"That's impossible."

"In fact, yes; in law—I tell you law is uncertain; it's hard to tell just what, from a legal stand-point, you've done or what you haven't done. Yours is a most embarrassing position. No layman can guess what conclusion the law would reach from such premises."

"Suppose I go into court and declare myself to be Richard Creigh?" said the victim of circumstances, with an effort at sarcasm. "Do you think I'd be allowed to qualify as Roger Golden's executor? Perhaps, you say, the law would go to even so absurd lengths."

"I don't say that," Burnett answered, reflectively, "but I will say there's no telling what might happen. Anyway, there would be delays and delays; you might be held here for months before everything was straightened out: you wouldn't be pleased to postpone your trip abroad indefinitely. And there'd be a great to-do, and no end of sensational stories, and scandal, which would please none of us."

He harked back to the old cry at every opportunity. The repetition annoyed Creigh.

"What if there is talk?" he asked, curtly. "It'll kill nobody. Personally, I want this dead-and-alive business ended right away."

"Naturally, my boy, naturally. But you must consider others. Publicity will be harrowing to me, for instance, and to that woman who made the scene,—think how it will agitate her,—and to all your friends, and——" he paused for a moment to add force to his closing argument—"to the young lady who is mentioned in your will. The papers will surely refer to her. I barely succeeded before in keeping her name out of them, but if the case is revived they'll show no mercy. They'll print what they'll call pictures of both of you; they'll——"

Mr. Burnett broke down; he could pile no further terror upon the mountain he had thus capped. In fact, he needed to do nothing more; for, in a few words, he had carried his point. Creigh, leaning upon the desk, picked up a pen and absently jabbed its point into the top of the costly piece of furniture. It was a gold pen, dear to the heart of its owner, but the latter made no effort to rescue it from destruction. He would have cheerfully sacrificed even more valued household gods at that moment.

"Well, Burnett," the young man said, at last, "I guess there's some justice in the way you look at things. I don't quite see how this publicity you dread so much could harm you, but if there's any danger of causing her annoyance, why, I yield, of course. Eventually this muddle will have to be cleared up, but I'll promise to do nothing about it until my return from Europe. By the way, can't you manage quietly to get that confounded will out of court in the mean time? If you could, matters would be simplified wonderfully."

"Agreed!" cried Burnett, with ill-concealed satisfaction. "I know the probate judge, and no doubt he'll not object to what we want. We'll recover the will, and nobody will be the wiser. Don't worry on that score. When can you leave town?"

"I've little to keep me here. There's my office, and the room at Mrs. Mack's——"

"I gave them up for you long ago."

"About the time you gave me up as well?"

"Yes, approximately," the other confessed.

"Much obliged for your forethought. Then I've only one errand to perform before my departure."

"You'll get away to-night?"

"Possibly," said Creigh, rising and picking up his hat. "At any rate, you won't see me again. I'll send you my London address, and you can notify me by letter of events hereabouts."

When the door had closed behind the departing visitor, Burnett picked up the ruined pen and surveyed it with a rueful smile.

"Beyond repair," he said. "Well, I can only hope that the gentleman's business will detain him a long time in England."

IV.

An hour later, Creigh, mounting a familiar flight of steps, rang a bell, the knob of which came as an old acquaintance to his hand. A maid whom he had never seen before took his card, and brought back word that her mistress was at home. Presently there was a rustle of skirts in the hall, a slender, black-robed figure stood in the door-way, and the caller, all forgetful of the programme of dignified reserve he had mapped out for the interview, sprang forward. At sight of his face she gave a gasping little cry, catching at the portières for support. Then, before either realized what was happening, he was beside her, his good right arm serving to end her need of reliance upon the curtains. If what they said was incoherent and fragmentary, each understood the other,—which is all that can be demanded in any conversation. And in some way, delightful at the time, but not clear to them afterward, it was agreed and covenanted that thereafter questions of dollars should never part them.

"So you believed me killed?" he said, a little later, when there was opportunity for more sober discussion. "Of course, of course; you couldn't help being deceived. It was my fault, all mine. I should have written—oh, yes, I should; don't try to make excuses for me. But, somehow, I didn't think of such a thing. You had said that all was over between us, you know, and I believed you; and I didn't care what happened after that. Still, when I found myself in the city again I felt that I must see you just once more."

"But why, dear, did you send up Mr. Creigh's card?" she queried. "Was it to break the surprise?"

"Oh, the card: I hadn't thought of that. It's mine now, you know. Or rather you don't. I'm no longer the late Roger Golden; I'm the present Richard Creigh. Let me tell you all about it."

He gave her his story, suppressing but one feature of it,—his inheritance.

"I've come back," he concluded, "to find a nice complication: Roger Golden officially dead and the court ready to authorize Richard Creigh to act under his will. That is, I'm my own executor."

"What nonsense!" cried the girl.

"Perhaps it's nonsense, and perhaps it's law; and perhaps it's both. At any rate, though, I'm going to carry out one of the provisions. The late Mr. Golden, in his will, directed that a certain sum should be devoted to the purchase of a certain diamond ring to be presented

to a certain young woman. Pursuant to the terms of this paragraph, I, as executor, have bought the ring. I have it here." He took a case from his pocket, and, raising the cover, revealed the band of gold and the gem. "It now remains for me to see that it is properly delivered to its new owner. Please don't refuse it again. What? It's too extravagant? Not a bit of it. You hesitate? Well, I don't. I've no option. As executor I must obey orders. Come, let's try it on. The left hand, please. Ah! there it is. Pretty, isn't it?"

"It's a beauty!" the girl declared. "But, Roger,—yes, I shall still call you Roger,—how can you afford to make such a present? We shan't quarrel again, dear—at least not about money—but, honestly, shouldn't you be more prudent? Why, this might mean——"

"House-rent for a year, eh?" said the young man.

"What an idea! Of course I wasn't thinking of such a thing." She blushed so charmingly that he caught her hand and bade fair to crush the ring and the finger within it.

"I start for Europe to-morrow," said he, abruptly; "imperative business, can't delay. Don't you think that if—er—er—if I could find a minister in the morning, we could catch the noon train?"

Of course she said no. Such a proposal was wildly impossible, a proceeding unheard-of.

"Novelty's a good thing," said he.

Then she had no trousseau.

"I've heard they've dressmakers in Paris."

Then the outlay involved in such a trip was an insuperable objection.

"I'll guarantee expenses."

Then a dozen other reasons, all advanced as convincing and all declared worthless. Then a protest that such a hasty marriage would set the tongues of gossip wagging.

"They'll wag just as badly if I tarry in the city," said he. "I've Burnett's authority for that statement. As a friend, he advised me to go away immediately. You wouldn't have me reject such counsel as his, would you?"

And, as it happened, Burnett's reputation as a social oracle, so far without the flaw of exposed fallibility, carried the day. The lady began to waver, then to yield. The suitor won her consent to his plan. So there was a wedding the next day, the quietest of functions, at which a vacationless minister officiated and the guests were limited to the family of the bride. As Mr. and Mrs. Creigh drove away in the carriage which was to bear them to the railway station, the wife confessed to the husband that everything had passed off delightfully.

"But," she added, almost plaintively, "I half expected you to ask me to invite Mr. Burnett. You're such chums, aren't you?"

"Oh, certainly," said Creigh, promptly; "we're great cronies, of course; but, on the whole, I guess he'd have found the situation most embarrassing, as he puts it. He might not have approved of a man becoming his own executor and marrying his own heiress, don't you know?"

William T. Nichols.

WITH THE DUCKING POLICE.

STANDING on one of the grass-grown wharves which line the water front of the old town of Havre de Grace, one moderately cold December day in the winter of 1893, I noticed a recently painted and peculiarly trim little sloop tying up at the landing.

"What boat is that?" I inquired of a typical wharf loungee—half gunner, half fisherman, and altogether vagabond—who was leaning against one of the projecting piles.

"Wil' Goose. New duckin' p'lice boat," he sententiously replied, regarding the sloop with an expression that was not entirely friendly.

"Who commands her?"

"Cap'n Spencer."

Recognizing the name as that of an old gunner of my acquaintance, now in the service of the State and employed in conserving, instead of destroying, the water-fowl that find a winter home in the great Chesapeake Bay, I hastened on board the Wild Goose, and received a cordial greeting from the captain and his one assistant, who composed the crew of the tiny vessel.

"Captain," I inquired, when the inevitable discussion of weather probabilities had been disposed of, "are you going out on patrol duty to-night?"

"Of course we are," replied the veteran. "This time of year it is necessary for us to go out every night. Up to the first of January, you know, there is no shooting allowed, except on Monday and Thursday, and the duck-pirates find it difficult to keep quiet five nights out of seven."

"Would you object to a passenger on this trip?"

"Not the least in the world. Glad to have you. Jake, there, is no talker when he has his hand on the tiller, and it will liven things up to have another man aboard. Put on an extra suit of flannel, stow a couple of plugs in your pocket, and be back here in about two hours."

The early December twilight was beginning to fall as I walked down to the wharf, after making preparations for a night on the wind-swept bay, not forgetting tobacco in various forms,—in suggesting which I suspected that the captain had spoken one word for the passenger and two for the crew.

My reflections during the walk were upon the circumstances which led to the establishment of a ducking police fleet in Maryland waters. Owing perhaps to the fact that comparatively few of the Commonwealth's law-makers were personally acquainted with the actual condition of affairs on the Chesapeake, it was not till many years after the annual flight of wild ducks had sensibly diminished in numbers that the Assembly became aware of the necessity for special legislation in behalf of the waterfowl that find a cold-weather residence in the territory subject to its jurisdiction. The people of the State fondly clung to

the tradition that the surface of the Chesapeake was blackened by the innumerable flocks of canvas-backs and red-heads, and reposed a degree of confidence in the stories which related that the boatmen on the bay were often obliged to sweep the ducks out of the way with poles in order to make a channel. Suppose a swivel-gunner did sometimes kill three or four hundred at a single shot, or a fire-lighter come in with a skiff so full of dead birds that its gunwales were only an inch above the water; such facts as these were of no significance, for were not the ducks there in uncounted millions?

But when at last it dawned upon the legislative mind that the number of ducks taking part in the autumnal migration had been reduced by one-half, many stringent enactments were passed in rapid succession. The courts of counties bordering on the ducking grounds were authorized to issue licenses to, and to collect large fees from, those who desired to shoot, either for pleasure or profit. During the period when the ducks were arriving, including the months of November and December, gunning was prohibited except on Monday and Thursday, and for the remainder of the season the number of "open days" was reduced to four. The pattern and calibre of the guns that might be used were described by strict legal definition; and indeed the present law is so severe in its requirements and prohibitions that citizens of the State, in whose interests the enactments were passed, find their ducking grounds forbidden territory unless they are rich enough to purchase sport at munificent prices.

It may readily be imagined that the enforcement of laws covering the surface of the Chesapeake Bay and its numberless island-dotted and forest-fringed tributaries is a matter of considerable difficulty; but, in fact, no persistent attempt is made to enforce them, except in that particular territory which lies within twenty miles of the mouth of the Susquehanna River. It is here and here only that the ducks, by feeding on an aquatic plant not found in the more distinctly saline waters of the lower bay, acquire that peculiar flavor which gives them an enormous and altogether disproportionate value in metropolitan markets. It happens, too, that these upper waters, being shallow and smooth, afford greater facilities for unlimited slaughter, as sink-boxes can be placed so as to cover the whole surface of the flats, which is not possible in the rough waves outside the land-locked coves and rivers. It is here, accordingly, that the police fleet, including five boats, is concentrated.

These reflections, historical and otherwise, were interrupted, as I reached the wharf, by the voice of the captain, urging me to hurry aboard, as the wind was shifting and he wanted to get to "The Battery" without being obliged to tack.

The boat on which I was about to embark would on the Carolina coast be called "a skip-jack," and in Maryland waters is specifically known as "a dead-rise bateau." This model, combining stability with great lightness of draught, is peculiarly adapted to the shallow indentations about the head of the Chesapeake, and to the half-dozen mud-bottomed rivers which, in the vicinity of Havre de Grace, pour their wide and sluggish streams into the bay. Small boats of this

description usually have two sails, fore and aft, in imitation of the schooner; but in the present instance the boat was provided with one mast, carrying mainsail, topsail, and jib, from which circumstance she secured the local appellation of "gaff-topsail sloop." It is believed that this rig insures greater speed and more facility in handling, as the steersman has one sheet-rope to manage instead of two, and it is therefore adopted for the vessels of the police fleet.

As the big square mainsail and flapping jib were slowly hoisted to their places on the mast, I could readily believe that with such a spread of canvas the sloop must be very fast and quite capable of overhauling the usual Chesapeake boat. The "crew," in reality a deputy policeman, informed me, in response to a question, that the topsail was never hoisted except in very light airs and on days when it was desirable to make an extra display.

"Captain," I inquired, as under the influence of a moderate east-by-north breeze we went dashing past the diminutive whitewashed light-house, "what authority have you in these waters?"

"My commission allows me to prohibit all unlawful shooting, to seize guns of unusual size, to confiscate unlicensed boats, and to arrest violators of the game-laws of the State. Those are my written instructions."

"Is there much unlawful duck-shooting?"

"More than you think," returned the captain; "more than anybody thinks who has no chance to see it. Why, there is hardly a night that we don't overhaul five or six boats that have no business out here. There are plenty of whites and negroes along the Cecil shore and in Bush River Neck who make their living out of this bay, and who get most of it out at night. Talk about licenses! Not one of them ever saw a license, or would know one if he did see it."

"Is not that land right ahead?"

"That is Battery Island; so called because in the War of 1812 the citizens of Havre de Grace built a fort there, in which they mounted a couple of little cannon. The defence must have been weak, however, for the British sailed right past the fort and captured the town, which they burned, in revenge for the shots fired at them. That light-house which you see to the southeast stands on Turkey Point, at the mouth of the Elk River, and eight miles below it is the famous Point No-Point, which takes its name from the fact that when you are out in the bay it looks like a point, but when you get in close to it you find that there is no point there. It is like the point of some arguments I have heard." And the captain did not disdain to imitate Andy Page, a celebrated Maryland character, who was distinguished for the heartiness with which he laughed at his own jokes.

"Have you a beat—a regular route which you follow?" I asked.

"Generally speaking, yes; though it is a course determined entirely by our knowledge of the places which offer the best opportunities for illegal shooting. I suppose you noticed that as soon as we passed the Battery Jake put the helm to starboard. We are heading now toward the entrance to that long narrow strait between the mainland and Spes-utie Island. The channel there is so crooked that it is difficult to get

through against a head-wind; and this gives the pirates a certain advantage, of which they are not slow to avail themselves when chased by the police sloops. By the way, did you ever hear how Spesutie Island got its name? No? Well, you——"

But the words died on the captain's lips, for at this moment there was a sudden flash, as of lightning, away off to the westward, and a few seconds later a dull but heavy report reached our ears.

"Do you hear that?" cried the commander, turning to his assistant. "They're using that swivel-gun again in the mouth of Bush River. Drop down into the cabin, Jake, and hand up a couple of Winchesters. Those fellows are desperate men in their way, and would not hesitate, should we give them half a chance, to pour a pound of buckshot into the Wild Goose."

Taking the rifles, the captain and I placed ourselves in the bow, and peered into the thickening darkness ahead, as, under Jake's skilful management, the sloop rapidly threaded the tortuous channel of the narrow sound and dashed out into the open water beyond.

"How far to the mouth of Bush River?" I asked.

"About four miles."

"How long will it take us to get there?"

"With this breeze dead behind us, about thirty-five minutes."

"Must have been a heavy report, to carry so far against the wind."

"Did you ever see a swivel-gun? No? Well, it is a weapon made especially for night shooting, and weighing from thirty-two to forty pounds. The usual charge is twelve to sixteen times that of a ten-bore shot-gun. If held to the shoulder, the tremendous recoil of this piece of ordnance would, of course, knock a man flat and break his collar-bone, possibly his neck; but this difficulty is obviated by a steel pivot, half an inch in diameter, which projects from the under side of the barrel and fits into an iron socket fastened to the stem-post of the boat. These great guns are not intended for shooting at single birds, or even at flocks. The instinct of wild ducks causes them at night to huddle together in dense masses on the surface of the water. This is for self-protection, for if one individual in such a combined flock is alarmed and takes flight, the movement arouses his neighbors, and so the warning spreads throughout the whole multitude. The success of the swivel-gunner depends upon his ability to approach such a congregation of birds so stealthily that no alarm can be taken. His boat is sculled silently within range, and you can imagine the slaughter when a pound of number four shot is hurled in one load upon a 'huddle' covering an area of half an acre."

A low whistle from the stern of the sloop caused the captain to spring to his feet.

"Where is it, Jake? Never mind: I see it now." Following the direction of his extended hand, I made out a black shadow gliding over the water in the direction of the shore. "It is nothing but a 'one man' boat. With the larger game ahead of us, we have no time to stop and look after him."

As the darkness became more intense, I lost even the outline of the scrubby, low-lying shore; but the vision of the captain seemed to

pierce the gloom on every side, and his softly spoken orders to the steersman had a confident accent, that indicated an exact knowledge of our surroundings.

"I'm looking for the gleam of a lantern, or another flash of that gun," he said. "The moon will not rise for two hours, and there is good reason to suppose that the pirates will take advantage of the darkness to venture out toward the middle of the river, which at its mouth is two miles wide. This would put their boat nearly a mile off shore, and if we can get in the neighborhood before they take the alarm we will give them a pretty chase. It is almost impossible to catch these fellows so long as they stay close in shore, for as soon as they are aware of the approach of a police boat they make for some convenient cove, where they abandon their skiff and take to the woods, through which it is useless for us to follow."

Suddenly, and, it appeared to me, close at hand, there was a blinding flash, lighting up the water for a hundred yards in all directions, and followed by a roar like that of a cannon. I imagined that near the central point of the momentary glare I caught a glimpse of the silhouette of a boat; but before I could be quite certain the picture was again enshrouded in darkness.

"There they are," cried the captain, "and not more than a mile ahead. We've got them, unless they take fright and clear out within the next five minutes. We'll be in the vicinity before they can pick up their dead birds. Hug the windward shore, Jake, for a pirate boat always goes up the wind, to baffle pursuit. If this is a chase we want the breeze in our sails."

"Now lie flat down on the deck," continued the captain, turning to me. "We've got to look for that boat with a lantern, and it is not the safest thing in the world: a light offers a particularly good mark for a bullet."

Up to this moment the lantern—a very large one, with a powerful reflector behind the flame—had reposed in a box, placed at the foot of the mast, which prevented any straggling beam from giving warning of our approach. Now the captain lifted the lantern from its hiding-place and turned it from side to side, so that the fierce gleam, moving in great quarter-circles, swept the surface of the water. Half a minute later it became stationary, and then I saw the piratical boat,—a little fourteen-foot bateau, containing two men.

I immediately became aware that our position was not favorable, for the steersman had not interpreted the to-windward order in a sufficiently literal sense, and we were still slightly to leeward of the pirates, who were not slow to make and act upon the same discovery. I am quite certain that, after we made them out, five seconds did not elapse before two pairs of oars took the water with desperate energy and the boat shot off toward the eastern shore.

"No use to chase them, with the wind dead against us," growled the captain. "They would be in shore, and laughing at us, before we made two tacks. Keep the light on them," he continued, handing me the lantern and seizing his Winchester. "And you, Jake, luff her all you can."

"Take in your oars!" he roared, placing his foot on the port gun-wale. "Bring that skiff alongside, or I'll send a bullet through her."

Somehow the threat did not seem to produce the desired effect, for the landward movement of the boat was not for a moment interrupted.

Seeing that the little craft was rapidly losing itself in the darkness, the captain raised the rifle to his shoulder, and two shots rang out in quick succession.

"Hol' on thar!" shouted one of the pirates. "I hearn the singin' o' one o' them bullets."

"Come alongside, then, or I'll give you a couple more of the same kind."

"We're comin'."

As the captured boat slowly ranged up beside the sloop I turned the light full upon its interior, and enjoyed my first square look at a pair of typical duck-pirates. The bateau was half full of dead birds; and seated on the thwarts, with their feet thrust into the mass of feathers, were two thin-faced, sallow, malaria-soaked specimens of humanity, whose every look and movement testified to the fact that they made their living in illegal ways.

"Hand up your gun," ordered the captain.

"We ain't got no gun."

"Well, come up yourselves."

"You ain't goin' to 'rest us, Cap'n Spencer?"

"That is precisely what I'm going to do."

"But we ain't bin doin' nuthin'."

"Where did you get those ducks?"

"Bought 'em."

"What were you going to do with them?"

"We wuz jes' boatin' 'em acrost the river, so's we could tote 'em to town in the mornin' an' sell 'em."

"Jake, put these fellows down in the cabin and padlock the hatch."

"You's goin' ter git yersel' in trouble fer 'restin' us," whined one of the pirates; but the prospect held out in this threat did not seem to daunt the captain, who hustled his captives into the little cabin, without paying much heed to their remonstrances. When they had been made secure, the confiscated boat was swung astern by a tow-line, and the sloop was again headed up the river.

"You are doubtless surprised that we found no gun in that skiff," said the commander. "That is because you are not familiar with the ingenuity of these men in evading the law. What do you suppose was the first move of these pirates when they caught the gleam of our lantern?"

"To get out their oars, I imagine."

"No; that was their second thought; the first impulse was to throw their gun overboard. These swivel-guns all have a ring in the breech, in which a long, stout cord, having a float attached to the other end, is securely tied. At the first intimation of danger, overboard goes the gun, the pirates relying upon the float to find and recover it at the first convenient opportunity. It is next to impossible to take these fellows with a fire-arm in their possession."

"But why not look for the gun ourselves?"

"It would be useless in the darkness. In fact, the floats are so small, and constructed in such a peculiar way, that, unless the approximate location of the sunken weapon is known, it is difficult to find it in broad daylight."

"You will simply leave this gun?"

"No: my anxiety to destroy it would prevent that. Jake, who has a wonderful facility for remembering localities, has the place marked down, and we will make a search for the weapon to-morrow afternoon."

For the next three hours the sloop tacked slowly back and forth across the river, and the biting breeze, which was veering to the north again, did not serve to make the dragging minutes pass more rapidly. We succeeded, however, in making another capture, but one which was attended by ridiculous rather than dramatic circumstances. During the interval of intense darkness which preceded the rising of the moon, our listening ears were saluted by the rattling of oars in rowlocks, and as the sound grew louder we became aware that the boat was approaching us. By a deft turn of the tiller the steersman brought the sloop into the wind, with the sails just full enough to prevent the flapping of the canvas, and we waited to spring upon our unsuspecting prey.

The boatman, bending to his oars, was unconscious of our vicinity until, when about thirty feet distant, the captain turned the light upon him. The solitary occupant of the dilapidated skiff was a grizzled old negro, who, springing to his feet and turning to face us, stood as though transfixed by the shaft of light.

"Good Lawd! it's de p'lice," he groaned, raising both hands above his head with a despairing gesture.

"Why are you so much afraid of the police, Mose?" laughed the captain.

"Me! I ain't 'fraid o' no p'lice," replied the darky, struggling to turn a bold front to the situation. "I ain't bin shootin' no ducks, cap'n."

"I am afraid we will have to investigate that story. Paddle close up, and let us see what you have in your boat."

In the bottom of the skiff we found an antiquated musket of the 1830 pattern, and half a dozen black-head ducks.

"Mose, if you did not shoot them, where did you get those birds?"

"Bought 'em, sah."

"What were you doing with that gun?"

"Jes' tuk hit along, sah, fo' fear I mought run up ag'in' some o' them night duckers."

"Your story is just a little shaky, Moses. Hand up your gun and birds, and then come aboard and go down into the cabin, where you will find congenial company."

"If I was to believe all the stories I hear," said the commander, when we were again under way, "I would be obliged to believe that there is an enormous night trade in ducks carried on in these waters. I have never arrested an illegal gunner who was not ready to swear that the birds in his possession were regularly bought and paid for. It is

quite probable that those fellows in the cabin will at their trial produce witnesses who will testify that they sold to the pirates the ducks which we found in that boat. This theory of purchase is invariably set up before the court, and, unless we have taken the culprits in the very act of discharging their guns, we often find it difficult to secure convictions. Of course the less said about the veracity of the witnesses the better."

The remainder of the night passed without special incident. A long run before the wind carried us out of the river and far to the south of Spesutie Island. The dawn was just breaking as we again passed "The Battery," on which I could now see the buildings of the government fish-hatching station. Long lines of ducks were winging their way in to the feeding-grounds on the flats, stretching away on our port bow, and thickly dotted with sink-boxes, each of which was spouting flame like a miniature monitor. A stranger to the scene would have supposed that the citizens of Havre de Grace were repeating their heroic defence of the town and had summoned their naval reserve to repel invaders. Far off to the eastward a dozen triangular sails were outlined against the glow on the horizon, indicating the boats that were engaged in beating up the ducks and driving them landward.

Keeping well out, so as not to interfere with the flight of the birds, the sloop skirted the edge of the flats, while the captain, through his glass, closely scrutinized both sails and sink-boxes.

"Your duties here are merely perfunctory?" I asked.

"Yes. An unlicensed gunner rarely ventures on the flats. Those who pay heavily for the right to shoot are, of course, watchful of their own interests and likely to resent any usurpation of their privileges."

As we approached the wharf from which we had set sail the previous evening, I became acutely conscious that it was time for breakfast, and also that the bay-chill had penetrated to the very marrow of my bones. There was, however, in my mind a vague consciousness that in these days of dictionary-making it would be unpardonable to allow physical discomfort to interfere with philological research, so I reminded the captain of his unfinished story concerning the origin of the name given to the little island which we had circumnavigated during the hours of darkness.

"Oh, yes," he replied. "Well, it was this way. In the early history of the country, when the land on either side of us was occupied by the Susquehanna and Delaware Indians, an Englishman named Utie, attracted by the beauty and fertility of that island, built a small house on it and became its first settler. He had been a student in one of the big English schools, and was very proud of the fact that he could read Greek and Latin. What is the word for a man who is always airing his knowledge?"

"Pedant," I ventured to suggest.

"Yes. He was a pedant, and a great coward as well, and so notorious did he become for these failings that even the neighboring Indians became acquainted with his harmless peculiarities. One Sunday morning, as he was making his way up Bush River Neck toward the log meeting-house, a big Indian, in full war-paint, stepped into the path, and, with a whoop and a flourish of his tomahawk, dashed upon

the affrighted settler, who immediately took to his heels, the blood-curdling shouts of his pursuer lending wings to his flight. The Indian, who was simply perpetrating a grim practical joke upon the timorous white man, followed his victim to the water's edge, where the fugitive threw himself into his canoe and frantically paddled across the narrow strait to his island home. Afterward, boastfully relating his adventure, he said that he had been attacked by four Indians, from whom, on account of their superior numbers, he had fled, and that while pursued by the howling red devils he had but one thought, which was that the island upon which his house stood was 'spes Utie,' which, he would graciously add, 'is Latin for Utie's hope.' From that time to this the island has been called 'Spesutie,'—at first facetiously, but, as the circumstance faded from memory, seriously."

I thanked the captain for his hospitality and for his story, assuring him that I would long remember the one, and would at least offer the other as a contribution to the already overcrowded volume of unique American nomenclature.

David Bruce Fitzgerald.

THE MAN WHO CAME TO TOWN.

THE town marshal, ex-officio editor of the *Lariat Exponent*, afterwards declared that his bad luck came that night with the rain. It first came leaking through the roof about midnight, and, finding a convenient crease in his blankets, trickled slowly downward, until it awoke him with a start. Being a man of few words, he simply gave a grunt of disgust; leaned over to a corner of the diminutive room, seized an umbrella, opened it, thrust it accurately under the leak, and calmly fell asleep again.

In the morning things were in even a worse state. The bed was a miniature island, the type-cases were half filled with water, and the press, a foot-power affair, stood cheerlessly in a damp corner as if waiting to be resuscitated from its all-night exposure. Even then, Hank made no remark,—his first act after sitting up in his blankets being to pull forth slowly a huge plug of tobacco from his hip-pocket, take a generous chew, and then, as if fortified against all manner of disagreeable things, to spring up and begin putting things to rights.

There was a knock at the door.

"Come," he shouted, gruffly; and there appeared to view a little old gentleman whose black frock-coat, white collar,—an unusual luxury in *Lariat*,—and air of quiet dignity accorded well with his gray hair and moustache.

"Pardon me," he said, with a slight air of diffidence, "but is this the editor of the *Exponent*?"

Hank nodded.

"I am Colonel Stemble," the little old fellow continued, affably, "and I am up here on special business for the Black Butte Cattle Company. Now, to come to the point, I am very anxious to have a special edition of your paper published to-day."

Hank kicked an empty tin can under the press, and looked hard at his boots. People were wont to say that he was a cautious man.

"It will pay," the cattle-man continued; "and this will give you some idea of my wishes." He handed the editor some pencil notes and a new greenback.

"Get the paper out by three o'clock at the latest, and above all things make it interesting."

"I'll do it," Hank replied, with customary brevity; and then, with renewed energy, he resumed the renovation of the little one-story shanty which served as editorial office, press-room, and home.

The old gentleman smiled to himself as he trudged away,—such a paternal, benevolent smile as to seem almost out of place in such an unconventional, wicked little frontier town as Lariat. As far as the eye could reach were to be seen the temporary structures of canvas and tarred paper which were the homes of its inhabitants. Up and down the railroad the first-comers had pitched their tents, and as the town grew rough streets had been formed, ranging back to the line of low hills at the east. Lariat enjoyed the distinction of being at the extreme end of the new railroad which was rapidly pushing its way through Wyoming towards the great Northwest. Crouch's, down the road, had until recently enjoyed that honor. But one fine morning after the first train had pushed on to the present site of Lariat the inhabitants of the older town had emigrated in a body, and Crouch's was no more.

True to its editor's promise, the *Exponent* appeared at the time named, but not until Hank McDougall, a man in whose veins ran a strain of thrifty Scotch blood, had engaged in several mysterious transactions with certain property-owners of Lariat, whereby, in exchange for some ready money that the editor had been hoarding up for many a day, the latter became the owner of a considerable strip of land along the railroad,—an acquisition afterwards explained by the following announcement which appeared in the *Exponent*:

"We take pleasure in announcing the arrival of Colonel C. H. Stemple, agent for, and a prominent stock-holder in, the Black Butte Cattle Company. This English syndicate, having been struck with the advantageous location of Lariat, is contemplating the erection of enormous stock-yards in our city, for the shipment of cattle from the Powder River Valley. It is needless to comment upon the great influence that this deal will have upon Lariat, the Star city of Northwest Wyoming, as the improvements will amount to at least forty thousand dollars," etc.

It was all very quickly and amicably arranged. That evening the colonel held an enthusiastic reception at the Alagazan, the leading hotel, where there were none so confident of the future of Lariat, so jovial, and withal so lavish with his money, as he. Incidentally, it may be said that the bar of the Alagazan did a big business, and that the landed proprietors of Lariat, Hank McDougall especially, awakened to the fact that they had a good thing.

The next morning the colonel, note-book in hand, and accompanied by the leading citizens of the town, inspected property available for the uses of the Black Butte Cattle Company. In the afternoon—for the

agent's time was limited—the purchasing began. The courteous old gentleman who had entertained them so hospitably the night before did not haggle over prices. He paid cash for his new acquisitions in crisp, new, five-hundred dollar notes,—a proceeding which, to make change, unfortunately, drained the town in a short time of all its smaller denominations.

By evening the English syndicate had acquired a choice tract of land lying on both sides of the railroad, in the heart of Lariat, for which it had paid out some twenty-five thousand dollars. McDougall, editor and town marshal, had made some thousands by the deal, and had he been a ready speaker would probably have said, "These Englishmen are the biggest suckers I ever saw." But, as it was, he contented himself with the simple words, "Beats all!"

It wanted but a few minutes of train-time, next day, when the colonel, carrying his compact little valise, his face beaming with happy good-nature, sauntered leisurely down to where the big engine was puffing and blowing, preparatory to its long trip down the road.

"I must leave just at this time," he said, "to transact some very important business in Cheyenne. But I'll be back in a week or ten days, and begin work immediately." And he treated the little crowd about the train to cigars.

The whistle tooted a warning note, the bell rang, and the colonel cordially shook hands all around. Stepping on the rear platform of the train, he turned about once more and waved his good-byes to persons in the distance. Just at the moment that the wheels began to turn, Hank McDougall, his marshal's star gleaming on his vest,—he wore no coat,—came running down Wyoming Avenue from the post-office, a yellow paper in his hand, which he waved dramatically over his head.

"Stop that train!" yelled the town marshal. But the conductor and engineer did not hear, and the train moved on.

"Jump, you scoundrel, jump!" again yelled Hank, at the same time drawing his gun. The colonel's only answer was a polite wave of the hand. Then Hank took a snap-shot at the fast departing train, and—would you believe it?—that little old man whipped out two pistols from somewhere, quick as a wink, and for a few moments the way the bullets whistled about the heads of the crowd along the track was something wonderful. And as the train grew smaller and smaller in its straight-away course over the prairie, the last act of the lone passenger on the rear platform was to wave a white handkerchief towards the little city of Lariat and disappear within the car.

The town marshal replaced his gun in his hip-pocket and turned sadly away. Deaf to repeated inquiries as to the meaning of it all, he disappeared within the editorial sanctum; for in the midst of all excitement he still remembered that, ex officio, he was an editor, and—he was both a thrifty and a cautious man.

An hour later another edition of the *Exponent* appeared, double-leaded, as if in mourning, and the copies sold for a dollar apiece. The editorial was brief and to the point:

"From a telegram received only too late by our town marshal, be-

cause of the necessity of forwarding it by mail from Crouch's, it appears that our late distinguished visitor Stemple was none other than the well-known desperado and confidence man Ike Rogers, lately a fugitive from the Black Hills. It is painful to be forced to state that the greenbacks which Rogers so generously distributed while in Lariat are clever counterfeits, in exchange for which he carried away thousands of dollars of our citizens' earnings.

"The editor of the *Exponent* bids farewell to his many friends, and announces his intention of pulling up stakes and moving immediately to the Big Horn country."

Charles Dudley Rhodes.

LANDMARKS.

Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.—Prov. xxii. 28.

NO text in Hebrew Scripture is more completely forgotten than this, and yet it merits as much consideration as the average quotation from Genesis to the Apocrypha. Everywhere we are removing landmarks; nowhere are we rearing them. But I write of the country, not the town, of which I know nothing. Scraps of old journals and quaint entries in time-worn commonplace-books have given me an insight into the conditions of my own neighborhood two centuries ago, and it has taken only two hundred years to bring down the beauty Nature was long in building to the level of the commonplace. In the struggle for wealth we have made the land poor, and have not enriched ourselves. My neighbor has a large farm here in New Jersey, and spends the winter in Florida, that he may see the country. In other words, he robbed his own home, years ago, to pay the railroad and his board bill, and now bemoans the barrenness of the landscape. He deserves to be kicked, and yet preserves the respect of his fellows; he even excites their envy. Another of my neighbors cut down four walnut-trees that he might enlarge his pigsty. After this there seemed to be no hope; for these men, who even shoot cat-birds to save their cherries, who stuff their stomachs and starve their ears, are not to be reasoned with. For years, as I looked from an east window, I saw that group of walnuts, towering above the other trees, and in summer their leafy tops seemed like a huge ball that was rolling along the horizon, for trees on all sides hemmed me in. Now there is a break. I can see beyond, where I do not care to look, or, looking earthward, trace the roof of the new piggery. With the proceeds of his crop of pork, he too, this enemy of walnut-trees, is going to Florida. But even worse things have been done. Another neighbor has felled an old oak because the shade rotted the shingles, and now has a sunburnt door-yard, with a sickly arbor-vitæ near where the old tree stood,—a very modest green tombstone of the fallen monarch. This neighbor never thought that his shingle roof might have been replaced by slates at about the same cost that was required to remove the tree. "But I

sold the tree for a good price," he said to me. "And you gave away your credit for common sense," I replied.

Perhaps there is no landmark so suggestive as an old tree. We are forever building monuments, but why not let those stand which Nature set up, even before man appeared upon the scene, and which were landmarks to our ancestors as well as to ourselves? We cherish Washington elms, Stuyvesant pear-trees, and Penn's treaty elm, because the men named once stood in their shade. Is it not as suggestive that an Indian once stood, it may be, under an oak and harangued his people? But, even if forsaken of all men, there is not a tree that has weathered two or three centuries but is as worthy of regard now as the scattered growths that happened to become associated with somebody's name. No mere association can the more ennoble a majestic elm. Because an oak, still standing, was riddled by bullets during the Revolution, it has no additional dignity. The murmur of the breeze through its branches is more musical than the whistling of hot lead. There is many an old tree still standing, but quite disregarded, because, as you say, it is nobody's oak or elm. No great man ever saw it or stood beneath its branches, so why should you? What rubbish! It is everybody's tree, teaching lessons, if you will but learn, that will greatly aid you on your journey through life. Tree-worship, once so common, and still existing, is now accounted among us as trivial and evidence of a low order of intellectuality, even among savages; but it is not as belittling as our modern hero-worship.

A recent summer day bade fair to be all that a rambler could wish, and I was off early, for an all-day stroll. Long before noon I met an old man from the town, and stopped a moment at his request. "The silver bells of the field-sparrows tinkle along the fences, just the same," he remarked, "but I hear no meadow-lark, and no wonder; the old landmark's gone. In the middle of this field there stood an old oak, that was half dead when I was a boy, but it was here a year ago when I passed by. Never a May morning that I didn't hear the meadow-lark that stood on the very top and whistled. I heard him sixty years ago, and I heard him last spring. It's all changed now, with that landmark gone. How I wanted to see the old tree just once more!" And the old man turned away. It was a sad incident, and spoiled for me a fresh June morning. The old man's words kept ringing in my ears, and every warbler seemed to sing the same sad refrain,—*"the old oak's gone."*

I remember the tree. It was not so very large. There were no wide-spreading branches, but short, thick-set ones, that bent in upon themselves until the tree looked like a stout man with arms folded on his breast. Standing thus, it had weathered the storms of two or three centuries. It was once a corner tree, and is recorded as such in an old deed, so we have some clue to its age. But this is prosy history at best, and true of many others: so what are the claims of old trees to our regard? Single one out, and study its career. Go to it in early spring and watch the swelling leaf-buds. This is the tree's busiest time, and yet how quietly it does its work! No one ever heard of a nervous or fretful tree. There's a hint for you. I know a beech that yearly bears

a half-million of leaves, yet their growth never made sufficient stir to deflect thistle-down from its course. Millions of drops of sap course through as many channels, yet there is no sound of moving water. It is in vain to press your ear against the bark; you will hear nothing; but the sap was passing upward all the while. No tree asks aid from its neighbors. It is self-reliant; and how much of that virtue can you rightly boast of?

We know that ere long the tree will afford us grateful shade; but did it make you any promise to that effect? You go to it, in fullest confidence, when the hot July sunshine scorches the fields, and you never are disappointed. Cannot mankind get a hint from a tree? Who ever lived that never spake of himself, never despatched a courier announcing his intentions, and never failed to meet the just expectations of his fellows? Death alone is the disturber of a tree, but man, with all his superiority, is the sole reason for such a word as vacillation. He is a poor student who can spend a day with a tree and go home none the wiser. I say this with confidence. As the tree is instructive in proportion to its age, why not let it stand? Remove not the ancient landmark.

And what, too, of those mellow autumn days, when the green leaf, before its fall, rejoices in gay colors at the success of its mission? Though its last days have come, it sees no reason for mourning, but joins you in rejoicing that the expected—but not promised—fruit has matured. Who that has gathered nuts, after a stinging white frost in October, but has learned to love the old shell-barks that are landmarks in the meadows? It is not childish to love an old tree. It is brutal not to do so.

But there are other landmarks than old trees. True; there are old houses, and we add, perhaps, old men. The village without its patriarch is incomplete; and what a difference between Colonial houses and those that have recently sprung into existence! We breathe in the odor of unpainted cedar and mossy shingles,—not strive to rid our lungs of the smell of paint. We seldom stop to look at a house built in our own lifetime; but how generally we scrutinize the old house near by, though we may have seen it daily for many years! Its quaint porch, the small-paned windows, the low eaves and substantial chimney, appeal to us, and we wonder if life is not more restful and soul-satisfying under such a roof. The old man in his high-backed rocker, dozing by the fireplace, the old woman knitting in her throne-like easy-chair, the willow-pattern china in the open cupboard,—what a picture! But these venerable people cannot long remain, and then what? The children scatter the furniture, the old house is torn down, and we have the smell of paint and the chatter of strangers. Can we not at least preserve one such house in every village, furniture and old-fashioned garden and all else, keeping it for our children's sake, an illustration on the page of local history? What a poor exchange for this is a single chair or an odd plate upon the mantel of a new house! Detached from their proper surroundings, few objects retain their real beauty. It is like the caged canary as a substitute for the free minstrel of the wildwood.

The present rage for relics and indifference to landmarks are strangely inconsistent. I cannot understand that man who chases after a china teapot that he cannot authenticate, and allows his comfortable old house to be modernized. No man should be governed by his children in this. Let them be taught to reverence the old, and not fall down and worship the new. If you must prove that you had a great-grandmother, gather up the old crockery; but pry not too deeply into its history. The cracked tureen that now holds the place of honor on the sideboard held soap-fat in the kitchen in Colonial days; but the old house itself was a monument to thrift and intelligence and patriotism: so let it stand, if possible, and worry less about the trifles it once contained. We are not so land-poor that the new house must necessarily occupy the site of the old. Even in large cities, an old house, here and there, is as picturesque as an open "square." A bronze tablet in the wall of a new structure is at best but a reminder that we once possessed a treasure and threw it away.

But let us go back to the country. Where do we find those features that most surely attract attention and rouse more than a passing interest? Not on the main thoroughfare so much as along the back-roads. It is rare that any landmark is left when the road is a mere extension of the city street, without its pavements and long rows of dwellings. The welfare of vehicles and the convenience of horse-jockeys has alone been consulted, and every tree that encroaches beyond private grounds has been removed. The world is in too much of a hurry to go round an old chestnut. Though it has weathered two or more centuries, it has acquired no rights; no respect is shown to its age. Happily, matters are better ordered along the by-ways, and there we have ground free to all and not shorn of all its beauty. I passed along a back-road, last autumn, where nearly every fence-post was draped with crimson Virginia creeper,—where dwarf sumachs held aloft an abundance of ruddy fruit, and trailed between the lichen-coated boards of an old fence were willowy branches of climbing bitter-sweet, laden with crimson and yellow fruit. Not a bird of all the summer's host had forsaken the spot. After a wearisome ride along a dusty turnpike, with little that was natural to be seen, except the sky above, that back-road was a veritable elysium,—a landmark for the old region thereabouts, which I trust no overseers of the highway will venture to disturb.

Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set, lest you force us to remain forever as strangers in a strange land.

Charles C. Abbott.

THE IDEALIST.

HIS aspirations penetrate the stars,
And local habitations build on Mars.

Grace F. Pennypacker.

ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICA: A FORECAST.

LAWYERS and doctors tell us there are so many law and medical students that the professions will be scandalously overcrowded in the next few years. Painters deplore the swarms of ambitious young men in the studios, and assure us there will be no room for them in the future. As for writers, they lament about the overstocked condition of the literary market until one is quite tired of hearing about it.

It is therefore with some trepidation that I make the easily substantiated statement that the increase in the number of students in these callings is small compared with their increase in that of architecture. About fifteen years ago, for instance, there were sometimes half a dozen Americans studying in Paris, sometimes one. For the last five years there have been from forty to sixty, while Americans have been frequenting, besides, the schools of Berlin, Vienna, Florence, and Rome. To take an example nearer home, six years ago the long-established School of Architecture of the University of Pennsylvania contained two students: this year there are over a hundred; and so it goes, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Moreover, this increase in numbers does not include the men who are getting their training in offices without going to the technical schools at all.

It may seem strange that with this unparalleled amount of serious work in architecture no one can yet say what the outcome of it will be as to that much mooted question, the American style. Among architects, nothing is so much talked about, argued about, almost fought about. Nor does this field of discussion lie fallow among laymen. The people of this country never took so much intelligent interest in architecture as they do to-day. On every hand one hears discussions over the merits and demerits of the latest office building or the beauties of the newest church. This is not to be wondered at in a community eager to learn, eager to travel, eager to adopt new ideas, and interested, perforce, in building; interested in architecture, too, for the hordes of young students now spread broadcast over the land are not slow to disseminate at least some of their newly acquired knowledge among their families, so that thousands of people who never looked interestedly at a building before now take issue on the question as to whether Gothic or Romanesque is the more appropriate style for a railway station. Of course, architects laugh at all this talk, but it would be as well for them to remember that there can be no healthier sign of the natural growth and development of good taste in architecture than this earnest desire for knowledge on the part of the public. After all, it is the despised public that pays, and it is the same public that gives itself the right to dictate styles as well as other conditions to its employed servant, the architect. Unquestionably, the more the mass of the people know of historic styles the less will be the demand for the nondescript and the commonplace, and the sooner will come to the front those scholarly designers who are worthy of the place.

In this state of things the vital question is, how shall the designers themselves be best trained? The most prominent architects of the country, those whose work is acknowledged by common consent to be the best and most lasting, reply that the School of Paris and those patterned after it are the proper training-places. There are many thoughtful people, however, who do not believe this to be the case, maintaining that the theories of the French school have produced a monotonous, uninteresting style, quite bad enough in its native country, and utterly out of place in this.

The immediate outlook, therefore, for the solution of the "American style" is not cheering. But it seems as though we were more nearly in a position to make a shrewd guess at it than ever before.

Let us see a little what the conditions are. In this country we continued until within forty years or so to copy England in a humble way. We copied her, of course, when we were a colony; we followed her faithfully through the reign of the Italian villa, the epoch of Victorian Gothic, and the so-called revival of Queen Anne. In England itself these styles were of a forced and unnatural growth, and did not last long. In this country the flimsy imitations of them fared no better. For that matter, people did not until within comparatively recent years think it necessary to employ an architect for domestic work, particularly for city houses. Of these latter there were in Philadelphia (which we may take as a town of average intelligence) practically but two types of house, the single and the double. These houses were all designed to be between party walls, and where a house happened to be on a corner no change was made in the plan, so that the astonishing spectacle is presented of a corner house twenty-four feet wide, full of windows on the front and back, with an uninterrupted brick wall on the side, and of course full of rooms either insufficiently lighted or without any light at all. In these days, when light and ventilation are so much sought after, it seems almost impossible to realize such a state of affairs. It was natural enough then that when men began to be trained as architects and had learned through books and through travel of the unlimited possibilities of their profession they should have burst loose from all conventionality and revelled in unrestrained license of design.

Among all the architects of that day, Richardson stood out pre-eminent. He had grafted his Paris training onto a deep study of the Romanesque architecture of Burgundy and Auvergne. He reasoned that in America we were in a position, so far as the ornament of the building goes, very similar to that of the builders of the monuments which he studied; that is, we were without good carvers, but had vast resources in the way of different colors and textures of stone; that therefore stones inlaid in patterns of blue and brown and white, with such primitive, if intricate, carving as was adapted to the style, would be the best means of producing an effect. This was undoubtedly good reasoning, and when he brought to its aid his own skill as a designer, backed by his tremendous energy, it is not surprising that his work and the copies of it spread from east to west over the whole extent of the United States. It came to be a settled fact in the minds of many

people that Romanesque was the long-sought-for American style, and that there was no use in seeking any further. So his school flourished as no one man's school has in this country before or since. Yet to-day his influence is waning year by year, and at the present rate will soon amount to almost nothing.

He was by no means alone, of course, as the introducer of a style in this country. All around him there sprung up copies of Venetian palaces and Pompeiian houses; there arose Gothic office-buildings and Moorish theatres. Meanwhile there was growing side by side with the Richardson school something that was in marked contrast to it,—a strong influence in favor of classic proportions and classic forms. So far from diminishing in the number of its followers, this school has been increasing steadily. Whether we like it or not, it seems to be forcing itself upon us, and no one who has thoughtfully considered the subject would be at all surprised if classic should become the predominating feature of American design, as it has that of the cities of the world.

Communication between all civilized countries is now easy to a point heretofore undreamed of. We know what men wear in the capitals of Europe, and we copy them; we know what they build, and we copy that. The levelling process going on over the world makes men wear cylindrical hats in Paris and New York, and soon will in Peking. Is it too soon yet to say that the same is true of the Five Orders?

The strongest minds in architecture have struggled against this apparently overwhelming force. Viollet-le-Duc fought as hard during his life against Classicism in France as Richardson did here. With the sanction of his government, Viollet-le-Duc rebuilt millions of francs' worth of castles and palaces and churches, made roomful of drawings that are still the wonder and admiration of the architectural world, and wrote volumes upon volumes of argument and learning in favor of the principles of the Middle Ages. In England, Ruskin was fuming and fretting and composing magnificent treatises against the march of the Renaissance. Everybody read what he wrote, and a great many people practised it. But what is the result? The little school founded by Viollet-le-Duc hardly exists any more, if indeed it exists at all. His buildings are looked upon as instructive and amusing object-lessons. Ruskin is quoted as a master of English, and there is not a celebrated theatre or modern public building in the civilized world that is not designed after the principles of Classic architecture. It really seems in vain that men say that there never was a time like the present; that all architecture will necessarily be frittered away into a thousand different styles, because no one knows in what style to design; that we in America are without traditions worthy of the name, without noble examples of native architecture to be inspired from, and that for the first time in the history of man designers have in their hands documents relating to the architecture of all countries and of all ages, and have, what is more important still, endless opportunities of travel,—a situation which makes it possible to have as many styles in America as there are architects. Hitherto, they say, the designer has never been under the necessity of making up his mind, as the moderns are, whether

he shall build such and such a building in Rococo or in Early Chinese, but has simply worked along in the spirit of his age, in the style of his period, ignorant of the existence of any other, and has consequently been able to express himself better than we can hope to do, who are dabblers in all styles and masters of none. But people who argue on this premise overlook the fact that the French and Germans and Austrians and Italians are expressing their ideas in the medium of the day, the nineteenth-century Renaissance, and that we, by scattering our energies as we do, are leaving an opening which the believers in that very living style are not slow to take advantage of.

Suppose we examine these general conditions a little more closely. Beginning with domestic architecture in England, we find conditions very different from our own. There is in England no necessity for porches, for outside shutters, or for the fear of too much light from long rows of mullioned windows. Thus the English architects can and do design in the spirit of the old work with the greatest success. The thorough way in which this old spirit which all men, even those of Latin race, agree has made old English homes the most charming in the world, is being preserved in the new designs, in most agreeable contrast to the servile copying of the externals of style that at one time characterized English work. One is struck with the deepest admiration for such work as that of the late John Sedding, and of such living architects as Ernest George, Bodley and Garner, Basil Champneys, and a host of men who are really designers in the truest sense of the word, constantly evolving and inventing, and never straying off into styles foreign to the one which they have adopted.

Domestic architecture in France is in by no means such a fortunate condition, either because of the natural tendency that Frenchmen appear to have inherited to live in houses whose distinguishing mark is formality rather than comfort, or because of the overwhelming influence of precedent constantly kept alive by the school training of their architects. The houses are almost invariably devoid of homeliness and charm. In all the greatest of the other Continental countries the same conditions hold, excepting that each race exerts its natural influence on the style. But the style is everywhere the same,—the nineteenth-century development of Renaissance,—a style of which one phase has developed into another naturally and steadily, like any normal architectural growth, for nearly four hundred years.

The men who design in this style which seems to us so cut-and-dried look with the greatest appreciation upon the domestic architecture of America. They are constantly going to examine it, and are always loud in their praises of its perfect adaptability to the climate and of the charm of our interiors. As a rule, they find much more to be admired in this latter respect in this country than in England. But as for the exteriors of most of our newest country houses a Frenchman does not think it worth while to give an opinion, looking upon such straining after picturesqueness as amusing enough as a pastime, but not to be considered as serious architecture. These strictures do not apply to the class of city houses whose numbers are increasing so rapidly where the tendency is distinctly Classic. Nor does it apply with much

justice to the so-called colonial country houses. A European naturally sees in this latter development a cause for nothing but approval, since it is in his eyes a manifestation of the Classic movement and carries with it a certain amount of restraint in design and of good proportion.

If we look at the business buildings of Europe and America we find a difference just as striking as in private houses. In England the buildings are not very high, and are cut up into a multitude of small parts following the same styles that are used in country houses. There is little breadth of treatment, little grasping of what is known as the *grand parti*. On the Continent we find the style of the period used for the business buildings as well as for everything else. The treatment is broad but monotonous. The buildings are generally studied as a whole, well planned and well proportioned. There interest ceases, the detail being, as a rule, crude and unfeeling, in this respect materially different from that across the Channel. As for business buildings in this country, all the world knows what they are. There is very little good architecture about them, but a great deal of good engineering. Just now it is very much the fashion to praise the huge steel cages with their walls carried on the beams from floor to floor and the weight concentrated into a few vertical shafts, and they are unquestionably admirably adapted to their purpose, but, with very few exceptions, they are not architecture. There is not much more architecture in building a tiresomely long row of offices or apartments, all of exactly the same height and all devoid of any kind of treatment, one above the other, than there is in placing them side by side like any row of brick buildings. Indeed, the architects of some office buildings are men who have never given thought to the principles of proportion, though of course it would be most unjust to the architects of the greater number not to acknowledge the ingenuity and skill with which they have grappled with an entirely new problem; while as for the structural iron-work, it is often as good as can be imagined. From an architectural point of view the greatest drawback to these disproportionate structures—and it is a very serious one indeed—is the fact that they dwarf public buildings, churches, and everything of a monumental character around them, utterly destroying restfulness and scale and marring the general appearance of a city beyond repair.

When we come to official architecture, we find England not by any means in the first rank. The designs are sometimes Classic and sometimes a revival of Gothic, but, as a rule, lack the grandeur and simplicity of conception which characterize those on the Continent. It is there that we find the best results from the employment of the Classic orders.

In these civic and municipal buildings the use of columns and entablature, so far from being tiresome, is apt to impress one as fitting and dignified, while the planning is simpler and grander in its conception than anything we have yet an idea of in this country.

As for our own public buildings, with the exception of the Capitol at Washington and some early buildings of the School of Wren, they have until comparatively recent years been of such a character as to make us a laughing-stock in this respect for the rest of the world.

We are just emerging from the impossible state of affairs when one man was set the task of designing all the public buildings in the country with the actual result that he designed none of them. And our municipal architecture has not been much better. It was possibly not the fault of our architects that most of the public buildings in America are badly placed. It is no one's fault but theirs that many of our towns are saddled with municipal buildings as ignorantly planned as those of Philadelphia.

But surely a new light is breaking. The mass of young draughtsmen and students that are enthusiastically studying the principles of design as taught in the Classic schools are getting a knowledge of the three cardinal points which it is the boast of that school to teach,—planning, proportion, and profile,—and that knowledge will go far to raise the standard of our civic architecture in the beginning of the twentieth century infinitely above what we are used to to-day.

To resume, then, we have seen that our country houses are developing a style in harmony with the exigencies of the climate and the needs of the people and are often beautiful besides, that architecture is not necessarily absent from our business buildings, and that the need of skilled design is felt more and more in those devoted to public use. Is it not almost a certainty that with the future development of studious academic architecture throughout the country there is coming a wave of Classic that will have nearly as much influence over the American style as it has had for centuries over Europe? And is it not fair to assume that the fearless vigor that has marked our modern work, both good and bad, is going to give a distinction to the style of the twentieth century in America that will set it apart from that of the rest of the world?

John Stewardson.

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS.

IT was the year of Hard Times; but it is always the year of Hard Times to some. She came into the dépôt about three o'clock. She was young, but she had lived with Sorrow so long that her face was a reflection of her teacher's, and Sorrow is as old as the world. She had eaten nothing since the day before, but she was not penniless; in her shabby black purse was money enough to take her home,—money enough, and not one cent over. They were poor and old at home, but they loved her and were proud of her. It was down in the country, where it was still and sweet. Before she reached home she had to cross the bridge: she did not know whether she would go home or only go as far as the bridge.

She crept into the darkest corner of the ladies' waiting-room to think it over, but she could not think. All around her, in and out through the doors ebbed and flowed the human tide; all the passions, the ambitions, the joys and sorrows of life swept by her. Some she read; some she could not; but she gazed impassively at all alike, with hard, unmoved eyes.

Once a woman stared at her as she passed, and then, going back, put a tract in her hand. It said in large letters across the top, "Are You Saved?" The girl looked at it with a bitter smile, and crushed it in her hand. Once a little child ran to her and leaned for a moment on her knee. She did not stir, and after one look into her face the child stole silently away.

Her head ached dully from faintness. Some one had dropped a few little fancy crackers on the seat beside her. She put out her hand and took one, then pushed it back, while her face flushed painfully. The woman in charge of the room looked at her sharply and turned as if to speak, but some one called her, and she hurried away.

A young girl entered with her lover. She was about the age of the other girl, but she did not know it was the year of Hard Times. Her happy eyes looked at every one with a shy appeal for sympathy. Her pretty golden head nestled against the high-backed rocker as if she took even that into her confidence.

The other girl in the corner was stirred to a fierce rebellion. She knew more about this girl than did the girl herself. Could *she* tell how much life-blood stained her exquisite garments? Could *she* tell how many days such gloves could hold off starvation? She trusted everybody, most of all the man at her side. Would she believe it if she were told that Hard Times could kill anything, even Love itself, —would choke it, and choke it, until it was dead? Then the girl thought of her father and mother, of the tender clasp of the knotted hard-worked hands, of the unfaltering trust of the faded eyes, and she pushed the picture back, out of her memory.

Suddenly the girl in the rocker looked up and across at the other girl, and her happy eyes filled with tears.

"Oh, Allen," she whispered, "I *wish* I could help her!"

The other girl saw the look, and stared back at her with a hard, defiant glare. Could she not even keep her own sorrow?

The girl's pretty mouth quivered under the look. She glanced confusedly down at the package her friend was holding. Then suddenly her face changed.

"I will be back in a moment," she exclaimed, and was away before he could answer.

She hurried, almost running, through the main waiting-room, all unconscious of the many curious glances. Then she ran up the stairs and knocked at a door bearing the words "Superintendent's Office." Without waiting for a response, she pushed the door open.

A man with a strong thoughtful face and iron-gray hair was sitting at the desk, and wheeled his chair round as she entered.

"Edith!" he exclaimed, half in greeting, half in despair.

The girl ran over and perched on the arm of his chair and began speaking rapidly.

"Yes, I know, papa, I'm a dreadful bother; but you said I might come if it was very important, and it is this time,—it truly is!"

Her father laid his pen down and leaned back, looking up into her excited face.

"What is it now?" he asked. "A wonderful bargain in gloves?"

The girl's eyes filled with tears.

"Oh, papa, you don't understand! I know I'm a worthless little butterfly of a thing, and no good to anybody, but I do think of something besides money and clothes once in a while." There was a little break in her voice, and she hurried on to cover it up. "It's a girl down in the waiting-room,—a girl with such a heart-broken face! When she looked at me I felt—well, as if I had been laughing where some one had just died. And then I thought of other girls and people that come here every day, and how sad some of them are, and how terrible the waiting times must be, and—— Papa, you know that lovely copy of Bougereau's Madonna, Our Lady of the Angels?—the one we liked so much, with just the half-length of the mother and child?"

"Yes," he said, with a puzzled expression.

"I had it framed for Fanny Keppler's wedding-present, and I have it with me: Allen carried it for me. But I can get her something else she'd like just as well. Papa, I suppose you'll think it's dreadfully silly, but if you could have seen that girl's eyes! Can I have that picture put up in the waiting-room and left there always? Is it too silly?" She was looking down, playing with his hands. She was a foolish little girl, and she didn't like to be laughed at. But the silence made her look up.

"Why, papa!" she exclaimed.

He drew her face down and kissed it as he never had kissed his foolish little girl before.

"Is that all, Edith?" he asked.

"Yes, papa, only I want it right away."

"But I sent Thomson out on an errand."

"Oh, I *can't* wait!—the girl may go! May I make Allen put it up? Up on the mantelpiece over the fireplace, you know."

"If Allen will," answered her father, with an amused smile.

"Oh, he will if I ask him," answered the girl, with a shy color at the sound of the confidence in her voice. "Thank you so much, you dear old papa, you!"

She ran down-stairs, hurriedly glancing at the clock. She had been gone fifteen minutes: what would Allen say? Allen was waiting for her with a somewhat injured air, and at first demurred a little over the part he was to play, but finally he agreed. Edith tore the wrappings off the picture. There were only a few people in the waiting-room, and they all looked on curiously.

"Be ready to run when this is up," Allen said. "I don't exactly care to wait for plaudits."

His face grew red as he caught the amused glances about him, but he would not back out. He mounted a chair and put the picture carefully in its place. There were little stirs and rustlings all around him, but as he stepped aside and the beautiful Child looked with His grave tender compassionate eyes over the room, there was a strange hush, and in the hush the man and the girl stole out unnoticed.

The hours slipped away: the girl's train had gone, but she did not know it. She saw no more the crowd about her: she saw only the

Child, reaching out His tiny hands in patient invitation, foreshadowing at the same time His own cross. She shut her eyes, but she saw Him still. The hard bitterness of her face was breaking; half unconsciously she smoothed out the tract in her hand.

Presently some one touched her, and she opened her eyes wearily. A plain, loudly-dressed woman was sitting next her, the tears running down her broad red face.

"I had a baby once," she said. "He died. He was all I had."

"Yes," said the girl, and she was surprised at the gentleness of her own voice.

The woman put her hand clumsily over the girl's shabby black glove.

"I know it's queer me speaking," she said, "and you only a stranger; but I kind o' thought, somehow, that you knew."

"I know many things," said the girl, "but not that. That is a beautiful thing to know."

"Yes," answered the woman, "I guess you're right. I've got to go now: that's my train. I'm going to see my sister. I'm glad I spoke to you. I didn't think you'd mind."

She went out. The girl was left alone, and again the hours crept by. She knew it was too late to go home now. She must go away, back to her old lodging, but she felt too faint to move. She didn't want to leave—the Child; and then her thoughts grew dull and confused. A touch on her shoulder roused her. She was the last one in the room, and the woman had come to tell her to go. The girl tried to rise, but fell back dizzily.

"You haven't had any supper," said the woman.

"No," the girl answered.

The woman went away, and came back in a moment with a cup of strong coffee. "Drink that," she said.

The girl took it and drank half; then she looked up.

"I was going home," she said. "They're old and poor, and I've made them think I was doing well here, but I haven't had any work for two months. And I couldn't write and tell them. I kept hoping and trying——"

"Yes, I know," said the woman.

She glanced uneasily at the picture, and then looked down at the girl. Finally she spoke again.

"I'm going now," she said. "It's ten o'clock. I've got a little room, but if you'd come with me to-night you could try again to-morrow."

"I'll come," said the girl, simply.

The woman went to carry the cup back to the restaurant. The girl looked around; there was no one in sight. She went over to the rocker where the other girl's golden head had rested, and touched it lightly with her lips. Then the woman came back, and they went out in the darkness together.

And the Child in His mother's arms looked down on the empty room.

Dorothy E. Nelson.

AN EDITORIAL COPY FOUNDRY.

A PROMINENT trade paper for publishers and printers publishes the following extraordinary advertisement under the caption "Special Writing":

"ED. COPY" saves work, then why should not country publishers use it as well as city editors?

For the last four years I have been supplying it *confidentially* to the press throughout the country, at extremely low rates, by an arrangement explained in a booklet which I will send to any newspaper publisher.

The information will not be mailed to any but newspaper men, so that, in writing, the name of your paper must always be given.

Just look at these prices for a supply of "Ed. copy" suitable for either a daily or a weekly, delivered at your office postage paid, viz.:

3	Columns Full Political Service, weekly . . .	\$1.00
2½	" " Independent Service, weekly . . .	1.00
½	" " either Democratic or Republican leader, weekly50
1½	" " either Political or Independent, weekly75
1½	" " either Political or Independent, weekly50
¾	" " Editorial Notes (Independent), weekly27

The 3-column service consists of one political leader, 4 leaders on "up to the time" subjects and Editorial Notes.

Bills are rendered monthly, or any of the above will be sent promptly on receipt of price.

EXCLUSIVE copy per column of 1,000 words (supplied on subjects selected by patrons when desired) \$6.00, payable strictly in advance, unless patrons are known to me. If exclusive copy cannot be supplied in time, money refunded immediately on receipt of letter. Correspondence invited.

The comfortable assurance reflected in the phraseology of this candid announcement of goods for sale proves that the advertiser knows his field. For four years, confidentially, his editorial copy foundry has moulded public opinion to fit particular localities, to suit particular constituencies, and not only country publishers but editors in cities have been parties to the transaction. The revelation is a suggestive commentary on the journalistic ideal. We have all heard many times of the enterprising scribes who write theses, orations, dissertations, poems, and what not for anxious boarding-school misses and undergraduates in colleges; we have come to accept it as true that the great speech delivered in Congress—the "effort of his life" of some fervid orator—is often the literary workmanship of some clever newspaper correspondent or private secretary; we have seen some of our famous preachers defending themselves against the charge of plagiarism in their sermons; a President of the United States has been accused of basing his speeches closely upon the encyclopædia; a governor of a great State was said to have had his speeches and messages written for him; some of our society novelists are said to employ literary men to

"polish" and otherwise improve their manuscript; but, so far as I know, the literary impostor has never before been able to penetrate the editorial sanctum and offer wares to the public under the mantle of a calling one of whose loftiest aims and most useful functions has been the exposure of charlatans.

What a powerful essay upon newspaper degeneracy these editorial Jeremy Diddlers could write from the book of their own experience! What huge hoaxes upon unsuspecting subscribers they could tell of—how that "leader" on "The Duty of the Republican Party" or "The Democratic Opportunity," couched in ringing language by the nimble genius of the ready-made "Ed. copy" factory, stirred their readers to the marrow and called forth commendatory letters from "Old Subscriber," "Vox Populi," and other admiring friends of all well-regulated country newspapers! With what satisfaction must these purchasers of public opinion, "at extremely low rates," have observed the pronounced favor with which the question "Will Russia Fight Japan?" was treated in their columns, and how keen must be their delight in giving the village sewing-circles and the grocery-store oracles new food for controversy in the discussion of such "up to the time" subjects as "Should Women Vote?" and "The New School of Dress Reformers"! It would be embarrassing if the editor should be held as brilliant as his editorials, and should be invited to deliver the Fourth-of-July oration, or to welcome distinguished visitors with a fitting speech. But doubtless for both oration and speech he could tap the fountain of his editorial inspiration by paying a little more than the usual "extremely low rates."

It would be instructive to know in which section of the country the ready-made, guaranteed-to-please "Ed. copy" finds the most patrons,—whether in the New England country towns whose thoughts and ideals are influenced by the near presence of colleges and universities, whether in the illiterate "black belts" of the South, or whether in the remote prairie towns of the West. One would scarcely conceive of the traditional Southern editor, who is most often of a proud and easily wounded spirit, delighting in controversy and wielding a pen with plenty of "sting" in it,—one would not think of him as feeding his constituency on an editorial diet of cold victuals, as it were, instead of on the more appetizing and "peppery" food of his own peculiar construction. Imagine him buying an editorial on "Negro Domination" from the workshop of a money-getting Yankee scribbler! With what contempt would he hurl back the insinuation that he should substitute the manufactured article for the virgin product of his own able pen! Nor is the average prairie editor, as we of the East judge him by his works, of the pettifogging, servile sort that would surrender his journalistic birthright at the beck of an itinerant huckster of copy. Your typical Western editor deals in no false pretences. As he glories in the circumambient freedom of his prairie home, so he glories in the freedom of his pen, and exults, in his breezy Western style, in its opportunities for picturesque vituperation. According to popular report, he is even ready to defend his opinions at the point of a revolver, a privilege which he shares with his fiery Southern brethren, and which

is possible only to those editors who are inspired by the divine afflatus of honest conviction. It is therefore not credible that among the self-respecting editors of the West the wholesale opinion-moulder has many regular customers.

The sale of editorial opinion to the rural press is in keeping with the tendency to subject the country editor to complete extinction as an individual force. The editing is now largely done for him in the city. We all know that a large proportion of these papers buy their news other than local in metal chunks of ready-printed matter all prepared for the press. Being well selected, although from one to three or four days old, and covering a wider scope than was previously common with country papers, this is a legitimate method, and a real help to papers conducted on small capital. But, even with the papers using this "plate matter" extensively, it is the rule to reserve a certain number of columns in which the editor may give individuality to his sheet by discussing important matters in the nation, State, or town. In this little corner of his daily or weekly he may exercise, in a small way, the powers of a dictator, if he is a man of brains and a skilled writer, or he may reflect the best sentiment of his fellow-townsmen in a manner that will give him the prestige of leadership.

But many country editors of to-day are mere printers, conducting a job printing office with a newspaper attachment. Doubtless with some of them writing is a hardship. They are not competent to express an opinion, and often have no opinion whatsoever. The passing of the country editor of the old school, who, though his style may have been ponderous and his dogmatic sense of right and wrong ludicrous at times, yet had the merit of having something to say and of saying it vigorously, is one of the phenomena of modern journalism. His successors are men of a different stamp: they conduct newspapers for that which is "in it,"—political spoils, or the opportunity, often turned to profitable account, of being "on the inside" of town affairs. Often they are not even printers. One of these—I may call them non-professionals—said to me soon after he had bought an old and honorable country weekly that he liked the business well enough, "if it wasn't for the writin' part: that comes hard." It is among these tyros of journalism, I fancy, that the manufacturer of editorials finds willing coadjutors to his business of deceiving the public. It is not conceivable that an editor who really edits and who enjoys the right of free speech would pose as the author of editorials which some conscienceless "hack" had written for him. Yet there are country papers whose editorial columns are vapid enough to require just that "gingery" and "snappy" quality with which the producer of "Ed. copy" doubtless invests his work. From this point of view he is not altogether an unmixed evil.

Aside from the really comic features of this traffic in public opinion, there is a serious aspect of it. For it seems to give support to the theory that editorials, however good, are not read, and are therefore of small account, and that the editorial, in American journalism at least, has had its day. This is a fallacy. While it may be true, in a measure, that editorials do not make public opinion, yet it cannot be denied that public opinion is reflected in them. The newspaper editorial

is the mouthpiece of the public, when it is not its leader. Without the one the other could not be. How thoroughly the editorial pages of the best of the metropolitan newspapers are read is shown by the great labor bestowed upon them to make their judgments worthy of attention and adoption, and it is also shown by that ever-present reminder, the mail. Every working editor knows that a slip of the pen, an error in printing a date, an inaccurate statement of fact, is reported to him almost in the next mail by some of his watchful readers. The writers of editorials are pretty good judges of whether their pages are read, for they are more than careful to keep within the bounds of rational statement. It may be accepted as true, I think, that the meritorious editorial page receives a wide reading and is more often a maker than a reflector of opinion.

Now, the country editor, by the necessities of his environment, is under sacred obligation to his subscribers to give them the best of which he is intellectually capable. In a farming community he is a guide, philosopher, and friend quite as much as, if not more than, the preacher. He, more than any one else, is enabled to keep in touch with the outside world. The new impressions and standards of the world at large, its great movements and tireless energies, the words and deeds of its great men, its thoughts, problems, reforms, and inventions, and all its multifarious human interests, come to the editor's desk day by day and week by week through the medium of the exchange list, however remote he may be from the nerve-centres of the nation. To study these things and to interpret them in their true meaning, as he understands it, should be his duty and his privilege. In a community where books are scarce and social and intellectual intercourse limited, and where in many households the county weekly is practically the only reading-matter, he could be, though too often to-day he is not, relatively as important a public servant as the editor of a metropolitan paper of enormous circulation. I know several country editors who stand toward their subscribers in exactly this relation, cultivated, conscientious, high-minded men, who are proud of their work, and who strive to make their papers welcome visitors and powers for the right. I admit that of this class there are few to-day compared with the number of them who belonged to a previous generation. This is due, I believe, to the tendency of men of capital, individually or in cliques, to own newspapers purely as investments, or for political ends, or "to help boom the town." They hire cheap labor, lack a broad, well-defined public policy, and place in editorial charge a man who writes what is expedient rather than what he believes.

Oliver McKee.

Books of the Month.

**The Evergreen: A
Northern Seasonal.
The Book of Au-
tumn.**

The Northern Seasonal named *The Evergreen* is justifying its quarterly existence by the appearance of another number, this time devoted to the autumn. The exquisite cover of stamped leather in brown and gray lies before us like some rich autumn leaf, and the design also bears the impress of the season of "mellow fruitfulness." The table of contents has a fall-like tone consistent with the accompanying illustrations; and, on the whole, a better balanced and more beautiful product of press and bindery has rarely met our eyes.

The feast spread for the reader is divided into five sections, called respectively Autumn in Nature, Autumn in Life, Autumn in the World, Autumn in the North, and a poem, *Maya*, by William Macdonald, which has a place all to itself. Among the writers are J. Arthur Thomson, Margaret Armour, Rosa Mulholland, Sir Noël Paton, Sir George Douglas, S. R. Crockett, Abbé Félix Klein, William Sharp, John Macleay, and Fiona Macleod.

The art of the volume is entirely unique. It stands for one phase of the wonderful new art-spirit which is overtaking the austere nature of Scotland and bringing its disciples into the ken of the whole world. Full-page illustrations in rich black and white abound, and the head- and tail-pieces, title-page, and colophon are exquisite examples of the native impulse in design. Some of the artists are Charles H. Mackie, Helen Hay, Robert Burns, Pittendrigh Macgillivray, A. G. Sinclair, John Duncan, James Cadenhead, Nellie Baxter, Marion A. Mason, and E. A. Hornel, the leader of the Glasgow school of painters.

**The Hill-Caves of
Yucatan. By Henry
C. Mercer.**

In this substantial and well-looking volume is condensed with able literary skill the history of the Corwith Expedition, which, under the inspiration and support of Mr. John White Corwith, recently went into Yucatan for the exploration of the many caves known to exist there. The expedition was led by Mr. Henry C. Mercer, Curator of American and Prehistoric Archaeology at the University of Pennsylvania, who has done much successful work of a similar nature nearer home. He is thoroughly equipped with knowledge, enthusiasm, and endurance for just such adventurous enterprises, and his efficiency may be judged from the rich results here recorded. That he is further fitted for his chosen task in an eminent degree is shown by the clear and fluent English of his text and by the unusual trait of observation which his sentences display.

The object of the expedition was the discovery of evidences of man's antiquity in what are called the culture layers of the Yucatan caves. The method of search consisted in the excavation of deep trenches through the floors of the caverns, thus turning up the rubbish or bones or potsherds deposited in other ages and in their order of succession by the dwellers in or visitors of the caverns. No such phenomenal discoveries were made by this expedition as have been made in some of the caves of Europe, but much solid work was accomplished, and a foundation laid which will be increasingly useful to future explorers.

Down the Bayou,
and other Poems.
By Mary Ashley
Townsend.

The fervor of a Southern heart beats in the verses of this noteworthy volume by Mary Ashley Townsend. Miss Townsend is no new-comer among the poets of her own land. She has been tried in the critical furnace and stood well the test, and from so venerated a pen as that of Oliver Wendell Holmes she has received uncommon praise, particularly for her *Captain's Story*, which, with some deft improvements, appears anew in the present edition of her poems. This feeling and artistic tale in verse recounts the last act in the life of a Southern colonel who discovers that his mother is really a negress and a slave. The climax which the poem deals with is strikingly novel and vivid, and Miss Townsend's strong art is seen at its very best in this favorite of Dr. Holmes.

Down the Bayou, and other Poems, is the product of the Lippincott press, and is a charming example of modern book-making. The poems are equally modern, and through them all blows the balmy air of the South, giving them a soft texture like that of some subtle and plaintive Creole song,—half Spanish, half English, and all languor and love.

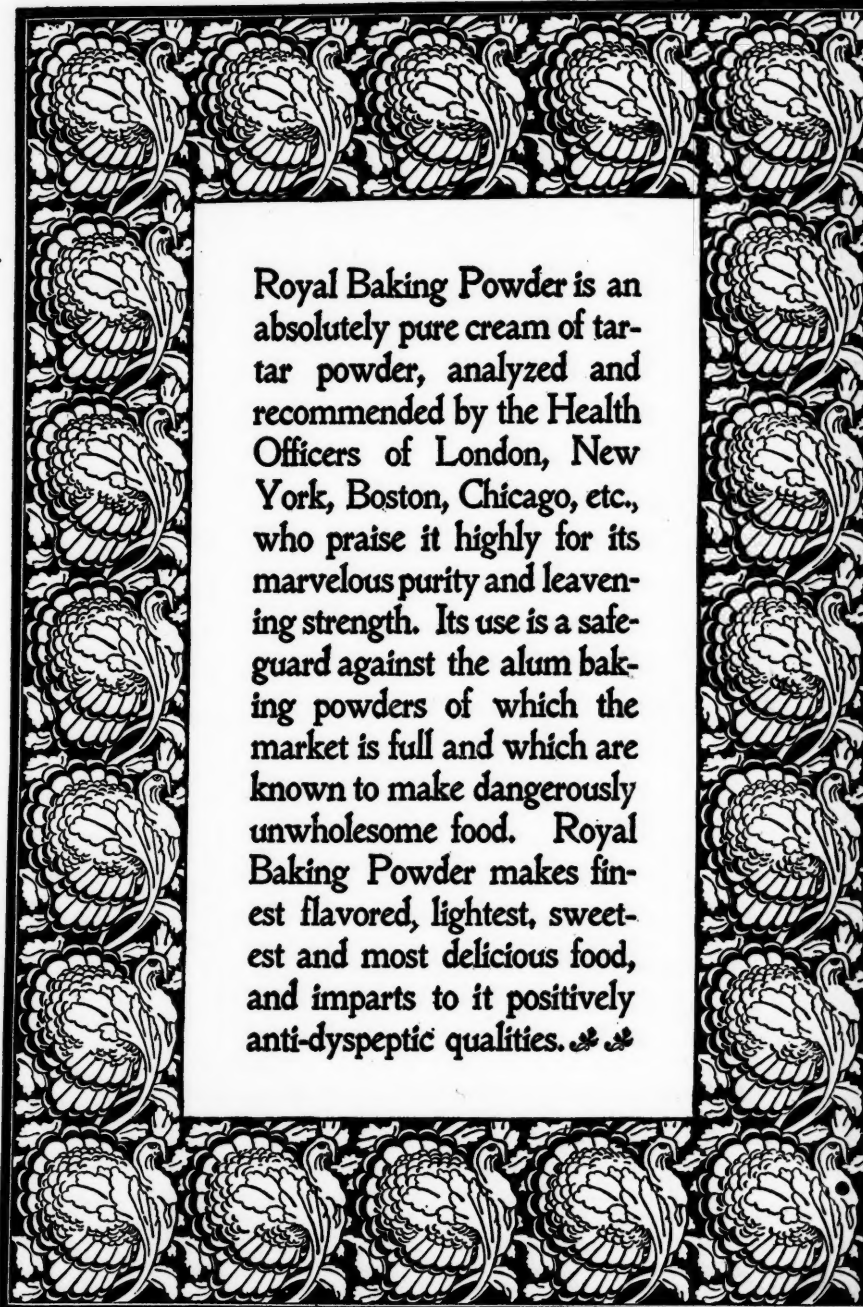
A Bubble Fortune.
By Sarah Tytler.

The pleasant side of life is always the best to dwell upon; the cheerful heart and the happy-go-lucky nature are always inspiring topics. Such is the point of view taken by Miss Sarah Tytler, author of *Noblesse Oblige*, in her last novel, entitled *A Bubble Fortune*, just brought out by the Lippincotts.

The fortune in question is that of John Newton, "a younger son of younger sons," who sought and found untold wealth in the Australian bush. His son Harry was to be made a gentleman, and Oxford was chosen for the scene of his development. But the fortune collapsed before Harry had won his degree, and under this fate, as under his luckier star, he was serene and content. He married a tradesman's daughter and became a respectable clerk in Foxchester. This career would have satisfied his simple heart and left undisturbed the happiness of his two motherless daughters, Nan and Nell; but Fortune's wheel gave another turn, and Harry Newton found himself sole heir to five thousand a year and a fine estate. This he enjoyed in the same tranquil manner till a new claimant turned up, when he retired with equal serenity. How the fortune came back, led by love, must be left for the investigation of interested readers, of which the charming story will doubtless have throngs.

English Grammar.
By Florence Beeton.

With the knowledge of the child's way of thinking and of looking at things which is derived not only from long experience but also from warm sympathy, Miss Florence Beeton presents to us her slender *English Grammar*, just published in its second edition by the J. B. Lippincott Company. For home-teaching as well as for elementary schools, this text-book will be found a capable assistant. It is systematized thoroughly, and is the outgrowth of a very genuine knowledge of the subject by one who well knows how to make it clear to younger minds. Some hints to teachers close the book and render it uncommonly complete.



Royal Baking Powder is an absolutely pure cream of tartar powder, analyzed and recommended by the Health Officers of London, New York, Boston, Chicago, etc., who praise it highly for its marvelous purity and leavening strength. Its use is a safeguard against the alum baking powders of which the market is full and which are known to make dangerously unwholesome food. Royal Baking Powder makes finest flavored, lightest, sweetest and most delicious food, and imparts to it positively anti-dyspeptic qualities. ❀ ❀

UGANDA.—Uganda is a vast tract of country situated to the west and northwest of Lake Victoria Nyanza, and is about six hundred miles from the coast. It is part of the British territory in East Africa allotted to England by the Anglo-German agreement, and has been occupied by Great Britain ever since 1890, when an invitation to enter was given by the king and people. Its area is about ninety thousand square miles. The natives of the country are the Waganda, a fine, intelligent race of men, under the rule of the notorious King Mwanga. Mwanga has no sons, and his successor will be chosen, according to present plans, from among three of his nephews, one of whom is a Mohammedan, the other two being Catholics. An active missionary propaganda has been carried on in the country of late years, with the result that the people are divided into two great camps, the Protestants and the Catholics, who each claim about three thousand baptized adherents. There are also, of course, the heathen and the Mohammedan sections of the population. The latter is under Mbogo, the uncle of Mwanga. The population, as a whole, is estimated to be from three hundred thousand to five hundred thousand. The capital of the country is Mengo, though the local head-quarters of the Imperial British East Africa Company are at Kampala. On August 29, 1894, a British protectorate was proclaimed, but it is only recently that active steps toward consummating the work were taken.—*Information.*

CHEESE.—“In buying cheese for an ordinary family of six,” says Mrs. Rorer, “buy either a pineapple or an Edam. They will keep all winter if necessary. Then buy a pot of Roquefort and a tumbler of club-house cheese. Keep them in a cool, dry place, and they will last until used. In this way you may have a variety at a little expense.”—*New York Post.*

BUSINESS TO THE LAST.—The old book canvasser was dying.

“It is hard, very hard,” he murmured, “to have this happen just as I had been given exclusive ground for a work which is bound to sell like shot.”

Then, glancing at the sobbing friends who stood around his bedside, he said,—

“Soon all that will be left of me is a sainted memory. I shall have departed, as Shakespeare—whose works in ten volumes at 3s. 6d. each, or £1 13s. 6d. for the set, I have often sold—remarks, to that bourn from whence no traveller returns. But do not weep. I have one last request to make of you. Promise me that you will grant it.”

“We will,” replied all present, in choking accents.

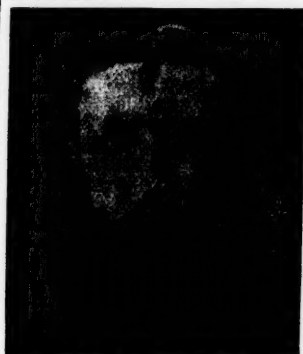
“I have your word,—yours, Uncle Joe, and yours, Aunt Matilda, and Bill’s, and Cousin Jim’s, and Dr. Slaughter’s?”

“You have,” was the unanimous response.

“Then,” said the dying man, with animation, “I shall put each of you down for a set of Wassel’s ‘New History of the World Before the Flood,’ in twelve volumes, full morocco, at £10 per set. The entire work will be delivered to each of you within a week.”

One by one the sorrowing friends filed out, too full for utterance.

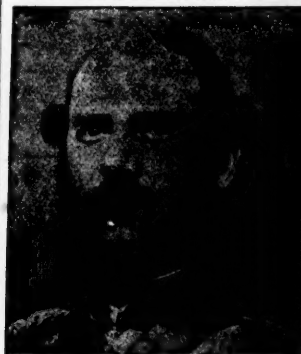
“That little stroke of business gets me an A 1 monument,” said the agent, addressing his wife. “And now suppose you send round for the undertaker, and I’ll see if I can’t get him to invest in a set and take it out in trade.”—*London Tit-Bits.*



King Leopold.



King George.



King Christian.

Kings and Emperors

of many countries not only have endorsed the

Genuine JOHANN HOFF'S MALT EXTRACT

but have awarded to JOHANN HOFF, the originator
of the extract, many titles.

KING LEOPOLD OF BELGIUM

Appointed JOHANN HOFF as Honorary Member of the Sanitary College at Brussels, in consideration of the highly nutritious and beneficial action of the Genuine *Johann Hoff's Malt Extract*.

KING GEORGE OF GREECE

Appointed JOHANN HOFF as purveyor to his Court, "in consideration of the high excellence of his Malt Extract" (as stated in the appointment).

KING CHRISTIAN OF DENMARK wrote:

"I have noticed the beneficial action of *Johann Hoff's Malt Extract* on myself, as well as on others of my household, and am pleased to acknowledge this."

EMPEROR FREDERICK OF GERMANY

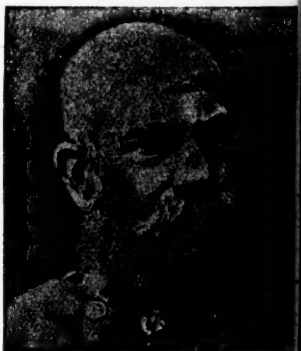
Appointed JOHANN HOFF as an Honorary Member of the National Society, of which he was the head, in acknowledgment of the merits of the Genuine *Johann Hoff's Malt Extract*.

EMPEROR FRANCIS JOSEPH OF AUSTRIA

Personally decorated JOHANN HOFF in consideration of the benefits derived from the use of the Genuine *Johann Hoff's Malt Extract* in the Imperial Household, and said: "It affords me great pleasure to decorate you with the Cross of Merit with the crown."



Emperor Frederick.



Emperor Francis Joseph.

IT IS A
STRENGTH
GIVER

Beware of imitations. The genuine *Johann Hoff's Malt Extract* has this signature on neck label. EISNER & MENDLSON CO., Sole Agents, New York.

Johann Hoff

RED SEA MIRACLE.—Major-General Tulloch has just published in London a report which substantiates the biblical story that the Jews escaped across the Red Sea dry-shod. Major-General Tulloch for the last year has been making governmental surveys for Great Britain in that part of Egypt where the Hebrew children accomplished their famous journey. In his published statement, the major-general says that in the spring of this year he was engaged in surveying the borders of Lake Menzaleh, on the Red Sea. On one occasion a sudden and violent wind-storm arose, the force of which was so prodigious as to carry everything before it, including incidentally the water of the lake. In a few hours the whole body of water had been abducted, and naught remained save vessels, mud, and sand. The vessels moored in the lake were stranded high and dry, with no water in sight. This is possibly what occurred in the days of Moses. It gives new interest to that famous history wherein is set forth the triumphant flight of the captives dry-shod through the way of the waters, whose returning flood destroyed their oppressors. An examination of the various routes over one or another of which the fleeing Hebrews took their way has demonstrated the fact that in many places they could have managed to cross the sea under favorable natural conditions.—*Information.*

COULDN'T SEE IT.—In a suit for separation, counsel for the plaintiff pleaded, among other reasons, incompatibility of temperament. He depicted the character of the husband as "brutal, violent, and passionate." The husband's advocate rose in his turn and described the wife as "spiteful, short-tempered, and sulky."

"Pardon me," interrupted the judge, addressing both limbs of the law. "I cannot see, gentlemen, where the incompatibility of temperament comes in."—*Green Bag.*

ANTIVENINE.—Professor Frazer, of Edinburgh, who for many years has been studying the poison of snakes and seeking an antidote therefor, announces the discovery of such an antidote for the poison of all snakes, even the cobra di capello. He calls it antivenine, it being similar in origin to antitoxin, the new remedy for diphtheria. As in the discovery of antitoxin, he began by inoculating animals with the poison, using minute doses and gradually increasing, until he was able to give an animal without harm enough poison to kill fifty uninoculated animals. Instead of causing injury it appeared to act as a tonic, actually improving the subject's health. In one case he administered three hundred and seventy times the minimum dose without injury. He then obtained blood-serum from animals thus treated, mixed it with pure poison, and administered it to animals which had not been treated. No evil effect appeared. He then injected the serum first and the poison afterward, without bad result. Finally he injected a deadly dose of snake-poison into the veins of a fresh animal. Symptoms of poison were soon apparent. He then injected some of the serum as an antidote. The symptoms quickly vanished and did not reappear. These experiments were upon small animals, his supply of poison being small. The British government is aiding him to get supplies of poison from India, and he has begun to operate upon a horse,—the animal used in procuring antitoxin. If this horse becomes poison-proof he will obtain serum from its blood, seal it in vials, and send it to India, where twenty thousand persons are killed every year by snake-bites.—*Information.*

you want

it to taste good. Cod-liver oil is more useful, and useful in more ways than we used to suspect; but who would take it clear unless compelled to?

There is no good in the nasty taste. We may as well cover it up as we gelatine-coat quinine.

Besides, a bad taste upsets digestion. It is difficult to digest what we loathe, and nothing but harm can come of taking cod-liver oil if we do not digest it.

Scott's Emulsion

breaks the oil into drops so small you cannot see them. It looks like cream; it flows like cream; it almost tastes like cream; it feeds your strength as cream ought to feed it. But you are taking cod-liver oil because you cannot fully assimilate fat.

Scott's Emulsion is fat that you can assimilate; hypophosphites of lime and soda besides.

50 Cents and \$1.00

SCOTT & BOWNE,

Manufacturing Chemists, New York

PRINTING A ROMAN INVENTION.—A Roumanian journal, *Foia Diecesana*, says that M. Adrian Diaconu, an architect and archæologist, has found in the ruins of an ancient Roman stronghold, Bersovia, in the environs of Temesvar, some relics which appear to give to the Romans the honor of the invention of printing. From his researches it would appear that the fourth legion, Flavia Felix, which was stationed in the flourishing province of Dacia Ripensis, practised the art of printing with movable types. Two members of the Academy of Science of Bucharest have examined his interesting results and pronounce them of high value. If his statements should be confirmed by fuller research, the history of printing will have prefixed to it a highly important preliminary chapter.—*Information.*

AN ODORLESS REGION.—"In that country once known as the 'Great American Desert,' embracing a portion of Texas and Arizona, there are no odors," said a citizen of Dallas to a reporter. "There luscious grapes and many other fruits grow, especially near the cross-timber country, but there is no perfume; wild flowers have no smell, and carcasses of dead animals, which in dry seasons are very plentiful, emit no odor. It was always supposed to be a treeless plain, upon which no plant could grow or breathing thing could live, but a large part of it is now successfully cultivated, and but for the rarity of the atmosphere, causing the peculiarity I have named, and the mirages, which are even more perfect than in the Desert of Sahara, no one would look upon it as a barren country now. Another singular feature common to the desert land is that objects at a great distance appear greatly magnified. A few scraggy mesquite bushes will look like a noble forest. Stakes driven into the ground will seem like telegraph poles."—*Cincinnati Enquirer.*

FLIGHT OF BIRDS.—A Russian proprietor, several years ago, wishing to learn the direction of flight of the many varieties of birds that visited his estate, caught a certain number of these birds and attached to their tails little tubes containing his address and a request in Russian, French, German, and English to let him know when and where these birds should be taken or killed. No reply came until the present year, when he received one from an unexpected and interesting source. It was addressed to him by Slatin Pasha, a prisoner of the Mahdi since the fall of Khartoum, who recently regained his freedom and appeared at the Geographical Congress in London. He states that in November, 1892, a bird was killed in Dongola which bore a tube containing a paper which was brought to him to translate. He was overjoyed to receive a letter from Europe, even in this strange method, and resolved, if he ever regained his liberty, to reply to the Russian ornithologist. This he has done.—*Information.*

A REMEDY FOR CONSUMPTION.—A new remedy for tuberculosis, intermittent fever, and malaria has been found by Dr. Cyrus Edson, late president of the New York Board of Health. It is called asepsin, and is applied hypodermically, and the doctor claims to have met with much success in its use. He is now having it made up in his laboratory and supplies it to reputable physicians. He refuses at present to disclose the formula, fearing that irresponsible persons will make it for the market and spoil it in so doing.—*Information.*

Do You Eat ?

Of course—but does your food give
you strength—and then

An Appetite?

Pabst Malt Extract The "Best" Tonic

will make your food yield to the tired
body all its nourishment and appet-
ite will wait on good digestion.

"Oh, there's substance to it—
it's life-giving, vivifying—it gives
vim and bounce, it braces—this be-
neficent Extract of Malt and Hops—

The "Best" Tonic



**Supreme
Award**

**World's
Fair**

THE HISTORY OF BREWING
 BEGINS WITH EGYPT

**MILWAUKEE BEER IS FAMOUS
PABST HAS MADE IT SO.**

PROFESSOR LOMBROSO, the famous criminologist, is thus described by one who knows him well: "In appearance Lombroso is not distinguished. He is short and rather stout; a few silvery threads shine in his dark hair; his moustache is gray, his imperial entirely white. His conversation is simple and pleasing and rendered exceedingly interesting by his powerful memory and vast learning. Owing to his long residence in Turin, he uses many Piedmontese words and phrases."—*New York World*.

IMPERFECTION.

At last I have a Sabine farm
 Abloom with shrubs and flowers,
 And garlands gay I weave by day
 Amid those fragrant bowers.
 And yet, O fortune hideous!
 I have no blooming Lydias!
 And what—ah, what's a Sabine farm
 to us without its Lydias?

Within my cottage is a room
 Where I would fain be merry.
 Come one and all unto that hall,
 Where you'll be welcome, very!
 I've a butler who's Hibernian—
 But, no, I've no Falernian!
 And what—ah, what's a Sabine farm
 to you without Falernian?

Upon this cosy Sabine farm
 What breeds my melancholy?
 Why is my muse down with the blues,
 Instead of up and jolly?
 A secret this between us,
 I'm shy of a Mæcnas!
 And what—oh, what's a Sabine farm
 to me without Mæcnas?

EUGENE FIELD, in *Chicago Record*.

NO FANCY PRAYERS AT WESTMINSTER.—The *Westminster Gazette* quotes a delightful story told by one of the speakers at the meeting of the Catholic Truth Society held in Bristol. A pious Catholic once visited Westminster Abbey. Withdrawing into a quiet corner to pursue his private devotions, he was summoned in stentorian tones to come and view the royal tombs and chapels. "But I have seen the royal tombs," politely rejoined the stranger. "I only wish to say my prayers." "Prayers is over." "Still, I suppose there can be no objection to my saying my prayers quietly here?" mildly pleaded the stranger. "No objection, sir?" said the irate verger. "Why, it would be an insult to the dean and chapter!" This is worthy of Sydney Smith, and distinctly better than the older form of the legend in which the verger sternly declares that "no fancy prayers are allowed here."—*London Spectator*.



For
Potpies, Dumplings, Puddings,
Biscuit, Muffins, Cake, use
Cleveland's Baking
"ABSOLUTELY THE BEST" Powder.

"A word to the wise is sufficient,"
 Is a maxim we've frequently heard;
 And now what we want is a maxim
 To tell us just what is that word.

Philadelphia Record.

Well, the word is only a short one,
 And its meaning is far from obscure:
 It enjoins all dutiful fathers,
 While they still have good health, to INSURE.

Penn Mutual Life.

All varieties of sound insurance may be had of the

Penn Mutual Life,

Home Office: 921 Chestnut Street,

Philadelphia.

MUSICAL STENOGRAPH.—A new French invention, the *enrégistrateur musical*, gives an instantaneous transcription of improvisations on the piano. As fast as the fingers run over the keys it marks on a paper the position and length of the notes and the division of the measure, using a stenographic notation, not the ordinary musical signs. The transcription is made on a roll of paper fifty metres long, ruled and prepared in a peculiar manner, while a pointer mechanically traces the signs to indicate the height and length of the notes, and the rests. The signs are horizontal lines, longer or shorter as the case may be, to indicate the duration of the notes, while the place of these signs on the paper gives the degree of height. This stenographic copy can be written out in ordinary musical notation by a copyist after five minutes' study.—*Information.*

PRAYER FOR FINE WEATHER.—There was the minister of Broughton who prayed for dry weather in the midst of a perfect downpour, and when notwithstanding his prayers the great blasts of rain still beat on the window, exclaimed, in his aggravation, "Lord, Lord, but this is maist redeeklous!"—*Macmillan's Magazine.*

FOG SIGNALS: THE ZONE OF SILENCE.—German experiments have confirmed the fact that there is a zone around fog signals within which the sound cannot be heard, a fact first demonstrated in the United States. A vessel steamed with the wind straight for the light-ship for a distance of four and one-half sea miles. At two and three-quarters miles the sound was heard faintly, and suddenly increased in loudness at two and one-half miles, retaining the same intensity up to two miles. Then it grew fainter; from one and three-quarters to one and one-half it could scarcely be heard, but then became so loud that it seemed near at hand. At half a mile the sound disappeared entirely, and was heard again at a quarter of a mile, increasing up to the light-ship. The same phenomenon was observed in going away from the light-ship and on returning to it a second time. That is, at a quarter of a mile from the signal for a breadth of a quarter of a mile the sound was inaudible, and again at one and one-half miles for the same distance it could not be heard.—*Information.*

THE CROCODILE BIRD.—A curious feature in natural history is the favor bestowed upon the crocodile by a bird bearing its name, through removing a certain parasitic leech veritably from the innermost recesses of the saurian's mouth. In thus acting he, in addition to performing an invaluable service to the crocodile, obtains for himself a leisurely and luxurious living.

Herodotus writes that the bird and animal are on the most amicable terms, the former entering the latter's mouth and walking about with the greatest confidence. The gentlemen of the Smithsonian Institution, however, are disinclined to accept this belief, but think the crocodile bird stands at a safe distance, extracting the leeches by thrusting its head into the animal's mouth and again removing it before the crocodile can close its jaws.

The saurian during the performance lies lazily sunning itself on the bank, with jaws wide open, and seems to relish the relief which it obtains. It is not to be believed, however, that the crocodile's sense of obligation for the invaluable services rendered it would be sufficient to deter it from making a feast upon its benefactor should an opportunity present itself.—*New York World.*



*The Complexion
Makes or Mars a Woman's looks.*

IMAGINE VENUS WITH A PIMPLED FACE!

Recamier Cream

will cure Pimples, Blackheads, and all
Skin Eruptions.

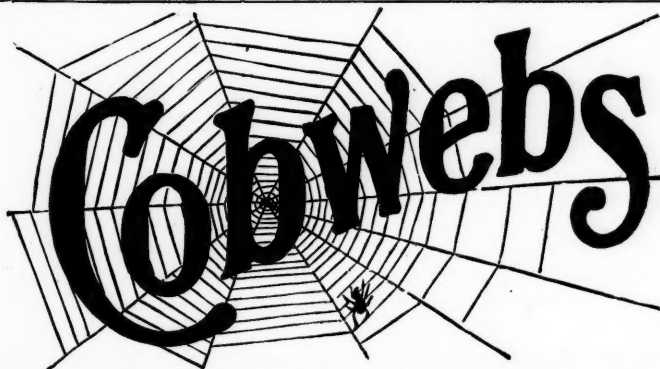
FOR SALE EVERYWHERE.

REFUSE SUBSTITUTES.

HARRIET HUBBARD AYER,

Manufacturer by permission to
H.R.H. the Princess of Wales.

131 West 31st St., New York City.



are usually a sign that a woman has more than enough to do; that all her time and strength are utilized in doing heavy work; that she don't use **GOLD DUST WASHING POWDER**. If she did use this great cleaner, her heavy work would be so lightened that the little things needn't be neglected.

GOLD DUST WASHING POWDER

gives a woman time to rest, time to go, time to read, and time to sew. Every housewife should have a supply of this great help.

THE N. K. FAIRBANK COMPANY, Chicago, St. Louis, New York, Boston, Philadelphia.

ANXIOUS TO BEGIN.—"Will you think of me when I'm gone?" asked Mr. Linger, sentimentally, as the hands of the clock moved toward twelve.

"Certainly," replied Miss Kittish. "How soon shall I have an opportunity to begin thinking?"—*Detroit Free Press.*

A REMEDY FOR BURNS.—Dr. Thierry, of the Charity Hospital, Paris, France, has discovered a remarkable remedy for burns. The doctor has had charge of the surgical operations at the hospital, and used picric acid as an antiseptic. One day a drop of lighted phosphorus from a match fell on his hand, without any sensation being felt, and the same experience was noted when some hot sealing-wax dropped on his hand. From that time the doctor tried picric acid on patients suffering from burns. The tissues of the epidermis coming in contact with the acid strongly contract, an action quite the contrary to that caused by fire or a burn of any kind. Under this treatment no blisters form on the injured part.—*Information.*

METALS MORE VALUABLE THAN GOLD.—Gold is commonly considered the most valuable of metals, because it is the most precious of the metals produced in sufficient quantity to be in common use. There are, however, several rare metals that are much more valuable than gold. Gallium, for example, is quoted in the market at three thousand dollars an ounce avoirdupois. Traces of it occur in some zinc ores, tons of which must be worked over in order to obtain a trifling quantity. Gallium is a very remarkable substance. At the ordinary summer temperature of 86° F. it becomes liquid like mercury. The latter becomes solid at 39° below zero. Most costly of all metals, save only gallium, is germanium, which is quoted at eleven hundred and twenty-five dollars per ounce. Rhodium is worth one hundred and twelve dollars and fifty cents an ounce; ruthenium, ninety dollars an ounce; osmium, twenty-six dollars an ounce, and palladium, twenty-four dollars an ounce. The last is about equal in value to gold. These metals are of no great commercial importance. Most of them are mere curiosities of the laboratory, having been discovered originally by accident, incidental to the analysis of ores. It has been suggested that some of them might be coined; but the supply of them is too uncertain. Iridium is utilized to some extent for making instruments of delicacy which must have the property of not corroding. It is obtained from "iridosmin," a natural alloy of iridium, osmium, rhodium, platinum, and ruthenium. This extraordinary mixture of rare metals is white. Much of it is found in washing for gold in the beach sands of Oregon. It resists the action of all single acids. Its only important use is for tipping gold pens.—*Information.*

BURIED FORESTS: TRANSFORMATION INTO COAL.—On the shores of Brittany, between St.-Malo and St.-Lunaire, at a place called Port Blanc, the tides have lately displaced a large amount of sand, say to a depth of some nine to thirteen feet. By this phenomenon forests that have been buried for eighteen or twenty centuries have been brought to light, and a vast forest has, it appears, been discovered in process of transformation into coal. Ferns and the trunks and barks of trees are to be seen in an advanced state of decomposition, being already beyond the peat formation, showing the films and flakes which are found in coal. Some trunks sixteen feet in length, still very distinct, are becoming rapidly transformed.—*Information.*

MADAM: We take the liberty of calling your attention to our Floating-Borax Soap, believing that a trial will show you its great value for toilet, bath, or laundry use. It is not an imitation of anything, but is better than all other floating soaps, as it is absolutely pure. We do not aim to follow, but to lead. No doubt you know the value of Borax, in the bath or laundry. This soap, and Dobbins' Electric (which latter we have made for the last thirty years and still make), are the only soaps which really contain Borax, although some others claim to contain it, and as Dobbins' Electric stands at the head of the non-floating laundry soaps, so Floating-Borax stands far above all other floating soaps, and is without doubt the best floating soap that can possibly be made. Compare its color and odor with that of any other brand.

This soap when made is a pale cream color, but with age the Borax in it bleaches it to a pure white. Some floating soaps turn brown and rancid with age. We take pride in calling attention to the following certificate from the leading analytical chemists of this city:

DOBBINS SOAP MANUFACTURING CO.,
119 South Fourth Street, Philadelphia.

GENTLEMEN: We have carefully analyzed the sample of Dobbins' Floating-Borax Soap you sent us, and find it to contain fully five per cent. of Borax (Bi-Borate of Soda). It contains nothing injurious for use in the bath, toilet, or laundry. We find it free from all adulteration, and therefore certify to its purity.

Yours respectfully,

BOOTH, GARRETT & BLAIR.

We believe that you will be so pleased with this soap that you will desire to continue its use, in which case please order it of your grocer, and be sure that he gives you what you ask for.

It is the only floating soap whose wrappers are printed in red, hence it is impossible to mistake it for any other, even at a distance. Ask for **DOBBINS' FLOATING-BORAX SOAP, red wrapper.**

Yours respectfully,

DOBBINS SOAP MFG. CO., PHILADELPHIA, PA.

PROVIDENT LIFE AND TRUST CO. OF PHILADELPHIA.

Attention is directed to the new Instalment-Annuity Policy of the Provident, which provides a fixed income for twenty years, and for the continuance of the income to the widow for the balance of her life, if she should survive the instalment period of twenty years.

In everything which makes Life Insurance perfectly safe and moderate in cost, and in liberality to policy-holders, the Provident is unsurpassed.



For Children While Cutting Their Teeth.

An Old and Well-Tried Remedy,

FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS.

MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP

has been used for over FIFTY YEARS by MILLIONS of MOTHERS for their CHILDREN WHILE TEETHING, with PERFECT SUCCESS. IT SOOTHES THE CHILD, SOFTENS the GUMS, ALLAYS all PAIN, CURES WIND COLIC, and is the best remedy for DIARRHOEA. Sold by Druggists in every part of the world. Be sure and ask for **Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup**, and take no other kind.

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS A BOTTLE.

A PREFERENCE.—BROWN.—“There’s a man who would rather fight than eat.”

Jones.—“Perhaps he’s been living on boarding-house chicken.”—*Puck*.

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF THREE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.—We have become possessed of certain very important indications as to the early civilization of Palestine by means of clay tablets. Not that the knowledge so attained is altogether new, or that it conflicts with that which has been deduced from yet earlier Egyptian records. It is well known to scholars that Thothmes III., when he defeated the league of Hittites and Phœnicians at Megiddo, in 1600 B.C. (a century before Amenophis III. acceded), reaped a spoil which indicates the advanced civilization of Syria, including not only the precious metals and chariots painted and plated, but also objects of art having a high æsthetic value, and that he found corn, wine, and oil abundant in the country, and many hundreds of walled towns, in which there were already temples of the gods.

Such evidence has, however, been slighted by those who regard the early Hebrews as savages, and who think that, though placed in the very centre of the ancient civilized world between the Egyptians and the Assyrians, they were, nevertheless, unacquainted with any arts and uninfluenced by surrounding culture. The new discoveries insist on quite another understanding of their ancient history.

It is surely a lesson of humility that the modern student should learn from such discoveries. Voltaire was no doubt a writer of great originality and acumen, though, from our present stand-point, wonderfully ignorant of antiquity. He finds it hard to believe that Homer’s poems could have been written down before 500 B.C., and asserts that papyrus had not been invented in Egypt in the time of Moses, though we now possess in the maxims of Ptah-hotep a manuscript as old as the pyramids.

We find, on the contrary, that not only in Egypt or in Mesopotamia was the art of writing known in the time of Moses, but that the inhabitants of Palestine also could pen a brick epistle, which in the space of a few inches contained as much information as can now be condensed into a sheet of note-paper. Such letters were neither heavy nor bulky, and could be carried in the turban or in the folds of the shirt-bosom just as easily as paper letters are now so carried, with the additional advantage that they were imperishable, as is witnessed by the fact that they are now being read three thousand five hundred years after they were written.—*Edinburgh Review*.

HOW YOUNG DENT SAID GRACE.—One of the best stories Mrs. Grant tells is not of her husband, but of her brother, Grant’s friend and room-mate at West Point. While she was still Julia Dent he came home on furlough with a real boyish longing for home fare and home delicacies. He petitioned particularly for corn dodgers, but cook was cross or the oven was out of order, so that only two of the desired cakes came to table. Young Dent eyed them calculatingly and then surprised his mother by asking permission to say grace. When this was accorded, the harum-scarum lad folded his hands, and, bowing his head, reverently said,—

Two corn dodgers for four of us.

Thank the Lord there are no more of us.

New York Herald.

QUINA-LAROCHE

A National Prize of
16,600 Francs.

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Peruvian Bark ^{AND} Pure Catalan Wine

(The same prepared with Iron, also with Phosphates),

FOR THE CURE OF

MALARIA,

INDIGESTION,

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NEURALGIA,

LOSS OF APPETITE,

WASTING DISEASES,

and GENERAL DEBILITY.

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Baby's Clothes

(as well as the baby) should be washed with pure soap for two reasons—First: for the sake of the baby's health; Second: for the sake of the clothes. You can safely wash them with

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TRADE MARK.

the *perfect* soap. It will make them sweet and *clean* without doing any damage. It is really the only soap with which to wash fine fabrics or delicate laces. Sold by all dealers at the price of common soap. Made only by

THE N. K. FAIRBANK COMPANY, Chicago, New York, St. Louis.

SEX SUPERIORITY.—Mr. Hall Caine, whose statements regarding the inferiority of woman attracted some attention, has called down upon his unlucky head a spirited rejoinder from John Strange Winter (Mrs. Stannard). In the commencement of her literary career, Mrs. Stannard says in *The Young Woman*, her father died, leaving the family without a penny. She lived far from London, and had no friends to help her in the literary world. "Yet before I was thirty my name was known all over the English-speaking world. I have married, brought children into the world, ruled my house, sold 1,500,000 of books, kept up an enormous circle of friends, helped several charities and many strugglers both in kind and in influence, have kept my house better than most women, and have a husband and children who worship me and are never really happy unless in my actual presence.

"On the other hand," Mrs. Stannard proceeds, "you have Mr. Hall Caine, who is a small, fragile man who cannot work in London, who, by his own showing, is thoroughly exhausted by the effort of writing a single book, a bundle of nerves and fancies. He began his literary career with an enormous advantage over me. He has a wife to mind his house and to bolster him up when his nerves get too much for him. I fail to see where his immense superiority over me comes in."—*Westminster Budget*.

DRAWING A LINE.—A young Virginian in frocks had been scolded by his grandmother for taking preserves from the dining-room closet without permission. The old lady, with much impressiveness of tone, told the little fellow that it was wicked to take things without asking for them, and that, although he might have thought there was nobody near him when he took the preserves, God was really watching him and keeping an account of his actions. The boy looked solemn and made no comment on the lecture. Later his mother saw him standing near the back porch in an attitude denoting meditation. The household dog, a big Newfoundland, was romping near him. He was not in a mood to play, and walked away from the dog, which followed him. He turned, shook a chubby finger at the dog, and exclaimed,—

"Go 'way, Jack. It's bad 'nough to have Dod follerin' me aroun', let alone you."—*New York Sun*.

SLEEPING-ROOMS.—Oil stoves and gas stoves should never be kept burning in a sleeping-room, for they are burned in the open air of the room, and, having no connection with a chimney-flue, throw the poisonous carbonic oxide of combustion into the air of the apartment and make it unfit for respiration. Even an oil lamp is dangerous if left burning all night, but an oil stove is worse, because stoves generally feed more flame, consume more of the oxygen, and give off more poisonous gas.

ONCE when Pasteur was dining with his daughter and her family at her home in Burgundy he took care to dip in a glass of water the cherries that were served for dessert and then to wipe them carefully with his napkin before putting them in his mouth. His fastidiousness amused the people at the table, but the scientist rebuked them for their levity and discoursed at length on the dangers in microbes and animalcula. A few moments later, in a fit of abstraction, he suddenly seized the glass in which he had washed the cherries and drank the water, microbes and all, at a single draught.—*New York World*.



Distasteful

to every woman—wash-day and house-cleaning time with their grim attendants; "aching back," "low spirits," "tired to death," "worn out," "out of sorts." Why don't you get rid of these things? Use

Pearline. There are directions on each package that will show you the latest, safest, quickest, and best ways of washing.

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Instantly Restores Gray Hair and Bleached Hair.

Leaves it clean, soft, and glossy, and no one dreams that you color it. Absolutely harmless, odorless, and lasting. Baths do not affect it. Does not prevent curling or crimping. Send sample of hair to be colored free.

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A free sample bottle of the finest rouge, "Imperial Venus Tint," will be sent on receipt of 2-cent stamp.

Imperial Chemical Manufacturing Co., 292 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

In PHILADELPHIA: Geo. B. Evans, 1106 Chestnut Street.

CONSUMPTION CURED.—An old physician, retired from practice, had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure of Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma, and all throat and lung affections, also a positive and radical cure for nervous debility and all nervous complaints. Having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, and desiring to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge, to all who wish it, this recipe, in German, French, or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail, by addressing, with stamp, naming this paper, W. A. NOYES, 820 Powers' Block, Rochester, New York.

IMAGINE THE REST.—“Managing editor?”

“I am.”

“I presume, then, that on you rests the responsibility for referring to my daughter Pattie as ‘Fattie.’”—*Indianapolis Journal*.

AN ABLE CITY EDITOR.—The second day after this his employer said to him, “Robinson, there’s a man come to town named Wash Gazley. He is a criminal and a deadbeat, who has killed five or six men. He is now drunk and going about town destroying the property of some of our best advertisers. Just touch him up to-morrow morning.” Robinson wrote a ripping item, in which he called the man a “coward,” “tramp,” “chicken-thief,” and so forth, and warned him to get out of town under pain of “further disclosures in the fearless columns of *The Dove*.” It was a hot paragraph, and when the foreman read it he simply remarked, “Well, I hope the man that takes the city editorship to-morrow will write a plainer hand.”

About ten o’clock the next morning Robinson was walking quietly along the main street of the town with his right hand resting carelessly in his coat-pocket. Suddenly Mr. Gazley stepped out of the door of a saloon. He reached for his revolver. The young man from Yale who couldn’t shoot took his hand out of his pocket. In it was an irregular specimen of lead ore. I remember how the local doctor tried to explain subsequently that the specimen didn’t hit Gazley in a “necessarily vital spot,” but it was vital enough for all practical purposes, and the next morning *The Dove* remarked casually that “when the cutthroats of this town meet around the hearth to-night there will be one vacant chair. Wash Gazley is no more.”

The fate of Gazley ought to have been enough for the other obnoxious citizens of the neighborhood, but of course it wasn’t. A week later a man came down from Placer Bench, winged the chief of police, shot out the lights in the post-office, and rode his horse on the sidewalk. *The Dove* reprimanded him. He took a foolish and erring shot at the city editor, who replied with a stone and returned to his office and wrote that “another old settler has gone out from our midst. Life is indeed uncertain. Now is the time to subscribe.”

Robinson stayed a year before he got tired of the place and went to San Francisco, but I don’t think that after the first three months he had any trouble. During that time I would not dare to say how many he popped over. Of course most of them he only wounded. But, as he remarked in his valedictory, “far more than we intended have gone with less preparation than we could have wished. It should only serve to remind us that in the midst of life a rock may catch us in the jaw.”

I never knew what became of him, but I fancy he has continued to take care of himself.—*New York Tribune*.

SHOWS HER HOME TRAINING.—A Bostonian of mark has lately distinguished himself greatly, and letters and telegrams of congratulation have been pouring in upon him from various parts of the world. These have been the subject of conversation at the breakfast table, and the Bostonian’s little daughter has heard of them. The other day she said to her mother, with a pathetic air of concern, “Mamma, do you suppose all those people would think so much of papa if they knew that he sometimes puts his elbows on the table?”—*Boston Transcript*.

BUFFALO LITHIA WATER

Springs Nos. 1 and 2.

Nature's Anti-Dyspeptic and Digestive Water.

Dr. F. R. Gregory, of Stovall, N. C., referring to Spring No. 1, reports the following case:

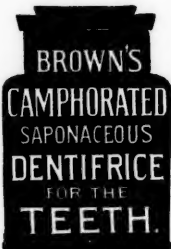
"Mr. W. H. Gregory, a sufferer from Chronic Dyspepsia, Chronic Liver Disease, almost resulting in Granular Degeneration, Chronic Diarrhoea, with Kidney complications, fits of Renal Colic, passages of Calculi, and all the worst and most distressing forms of Gastro-Intestinal Disorders, after having exhausted the catalogue of dietetics and the Materia Medica and Therapeutics, under the advice and treatment of a number of the most skillful and experienced physicians, without benefit, and having meanwhile declined from a normal weight of two hundred and twenty to one hundred and six pounds, has been completely restored to vigorous health by a visit of three months to the Buffalo Lithia Springs and the free use of the water of Spring No. 1, to the exclusion of all other remedies, gaining while at the Spring seventy-two pounds in weight, and in six months thereafter forty-two pounds additional. The transition from a state of cadaveric emaciation to new life of robust health and strength in so short a time seems little short of miraculous."

F. J. Gregory, M. D., Keysville, Virginia.

"For eighteen months my wife, aged forty-one years, was a sufferer from a Gastro-Intestinal Catarrh, which resisted my best-directed efforts at relief. The taking of the smallest quantity of the most easily digested food on the stomach would produce an attack of nausea and vomiting, the severity of which is seldom witnessed, and when the stomach was free of food she would have attacks of Gastralgia of the most excruciating nature. She also suffered from habitual constipation, at times with hemorrhages from the bowels. I pursued the usual line of treatment, and called to my help two of the most skillful physicians in Southside, Virginia, who supplemented my treatment with some of the newer drugs, but with no benefit, and so her condition went on from bad to worse until death seemed almost imminent from inanition. I then put her on a milk diet, with a glass of **BUFFALO LITHIA WATER** first bottle improvement was marked, and before a case had been used her cure was complete. It has been nearly two years since, and there has been only one slight recurrence, which was a few days since, and it readily disappeared on the use of the water for a few days."

This Water is for sale by druggists generally, or in cases of one dozen half-gallon bottles \$5.00 f.o.b. at the Springs. Descriptive pamphlets sent to any address.

THOMAS F. GOODE, Proprietor, Buffalo Lithia Springs, Va.



THE BEST TOILET LUXURY AS A DENTIFRICE IN THE WORLD.

TO CLEANSE AND WHITEN THE TEETH,

TO REMOVE TARTAR FROM THE TEETH,

TO SWEETEN THE BREATH AND PRESERVE THE TEETH,

TO MAKE THE GUMS HARD AND HEALTHY,

USE BROWN'S CAMPHORATED SAPONACEOUS DENTIFRICE.

Price, Twenty-Five Cents a Jar.

For Sale by all Druggists.

Carl L. Jensen's

CRYSTAL PEPSIN TABLETS are nature's only cure for dyspepsia and indigestion. They prevent dulness after eating, and induce a refreshed feeling of renewed energy. Delivered by mail to any post-office in the United States on receipt of fifty cents in stamps. Samples mailed free. Address the CARL L. JENSEN COMPANY, 400 N. Third Street, Philadelphia, Pa. For sale at all druggists'.

KNIGHTS TEMPLARS.—Knight Templary is a modern affair, at least in its present form. Among all the Masonic degrees in the United States it is by far the most popular, and alone among the degrees of the so-called American rite bears no relation to symbolic Masonry. It is unique in that it is based fundamentally upon a belief in the Christian religion. It depends upon the good faith and conscience of those who take its obligations. The mediæval Knight Templar protected the pious pilgrims on their way to the Holy City, and the modern Knight Templar is supposed to protect the weak and to show that the age of true chivalry still exists. The old order was founded in 1118, by nine French knights, and was disbanded by the Pope in 1297. Six organizations claim the direct inheritance of Knight Templary, one each in France, Germany, Sweden, and Scotland, one in the present Scottish Rite, and one the old English and present American Templars. The claim of actual historic continuity rests, however, upon an exceedingly small basis. The Templar degrees were brought here by British officers prior to the Revolution, and were conferred irregularly. The oldest commandery is a moot point. The grand commandery of Massachusetts and Rhode Island is the oldest among the constituents of the grand encampment of the United States, its organization dating from the early years of this century, the triennial conclave now being held at Boston being the twenty-sixth. The order's ritual is beautiful and impressive. To be "gentle and courteous knights, to love mercy, and to be just and true men," is the lesson prominently taught in modern Knight Templary in America. As a revival of what was best in the Middle-Age chivalry, it is an adaptation of speculative chivalry, retaining the form but remodelling the substance of legend, history, and tradition.—*Information.*

THACKERAY'S VERSES ON DR. MCCOSH.—Most persons seem to have forgotten Thackeray's allusion in verse to Dr. McCosh. When the discussion over the doctor's appointment to the headship of Queen's College, Belfast, was at its height, Thackeray wrote in his characteristic Irish brogue a poem purporting to be by the hand of Master Molloy Mollony, aged fifteen. The opening stanza runs thus:

As I think of the insult that's done to this nation,
Hot tears of revinge from me fatures I wash,
And uphold in this pome to the world's daytistation
The sleeves that appointed Professor McCosh.

New York Sun.

ROB ROY, THE PHILANTHROPIST.—During more than forty years John MacGregor (Rob Roy) was a great exemplar of the best sort of philanthropy. There was some narrowness, perhaps bigotry, in his religious creed, but none whatever in his practice. He was a man of considerable attainments in literature, science, art, and music. Above all, he was a born adventurer, as his voyages in his "Rob Roy" canoe testify, and all the profits that he obtained from his books and lectures were handed over to the charities—charities of the best sort—in which he was interested.

By lecturing alone he earned and thus applied ten thousand pounds, and having set himself to collect that sum he persevered in the work during several years, and after his health had begun to fail, until the total had been reached. Dying in 1892, at the age of sixty-seven, he left a record of steady heroism and of real service to his fellow-men which is almost unique.—*Academy.*

Food For Both.

Every nursing mother needs the kind of nourishment there is in

ANHEUSER-BUSCH'S
Malt-Nutrine
TRADE MARK.

The baby needs it in order to *grow* healthy and plump; the mother needs it in order to *keep* healthy and plump.

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Send for handsomely illustrated colored booklets and other reading matter.



SPECIAL NOTICE—The Supreme Court of Washington, D. C. has awarded to the Anheuser-Busch Brewing Ass'n. the disputed Highest Score of award with Medal and Diploma of the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893.

THE SECOND SUMMER, many mothers believe, is the most precarious in a child's life; generally it may be true, but you will find that mothers and physicians familiar with the value of the Gail Borden Eagle Brand Condensed Milk do not so regard it.

NEW FAST CALIFORNIA TRAIN.—The Santa Fé Route has inaugurated new and strictly limited first-class service to Southern California.

The California Limited leaves Chicago at 6.00 P.M. daily, reaching Los Angeles and San Diego in three days and San Francisco in three and a half days, thus reducing the time half a day. Principal fast trains from the East connect with it.

Equipment consists of superb new vestibuled Pullman palace and compartment sleepers, chair-car, and dining-car, through from Chicago to Los Angeles without change. Entire train lighted by Pintsch gas. This is the fastest and most luxurious service via any line to California.

The former train leaving Chicago at 10.00 P.M. is continued, carrying through palace sleeper and tourist sleeper to San Francisco, and tourist sleeper to Los Angeles.

Full particulars obtained by addressing G. T. Nicholson, General Passenger Agent, Monadnock Building, Chicago.

A BUSY DOCTOR.—Dr. Liddell's morning levees were crowded beyond description. It was his pride and boast that he could feel his patient's pulse, look at his tongue, sound him with a stethoscope, write his prescription, and pocket his fee, in a space of time varying from two to five minutes.

One day an army man was shown into the consulting-room and underwent what might be termed the instantaneous process. When it was completed, the patient shook hands with the doctor and said,—

"I am especially glad to meet you, as I have often heard my father, Colonel Forrester, speak of his old friend Dr. Liddell."

"What!" exclaimed the doctor. "Are you Dick Forrester's son?"

"I am, sir."

"My dear fellow," exclaimed the doctor, "fling that prescription into the fire, please, and sit down and tell me what is the matter with you."—*London Tit-Bits*.

A GREEK JUDGE'S SENTENCE.—A curious judgment was pronounced the other day by a judge in a court of law at Volisso, in the island of Scio. An action for damages was brought by two persons against the local railway company for losses sustained by a collision. It appeared that a man had lost an arm and a young woman had lost her husband. The judge—a Greek—assessed the damages thus. He gave six thousand piastres to the man for the loss of his arm and two thousand to the woman for the loss of her husband. At this there were loud murmurs, whereupon the judge gave his reasons in these terms: "My dear people, my verdict must remain, for you will see it is a just one. Poor Nikola has lost his arm, and nothing on earth can restore that priceless limb. But you" (turning to the woman)—"you are still young and pretty. You have now some money; you will easily find another husband, who possibly may be as good as—perhaps better than—your dead lord. That is my verdict, my people; and so it must go forth." So saying, the judge left the hall. The people cheered him and congratulated themselves on having such a judge.—*London News*.

A PARROT YARN.—A man whose niece had coaxed him to buy her a parrot succeeded in getting a bird that was warranted a good talker. He brought it home, and after putting it in a cage stood before it and said, "Say uncle, Polly." The bird did not respond, and after repeating the sentence a dozen times or more with no better success the uncle put his hand into the cage, and, grabbing the bird by the neck, shook him until his head wobbled around, all the time yelling to him, "Say uncle, goll darn you, say uncle!" The bird looked limp and lifeless, and, disgusted with his purchase, the old fellow took the parrot out into the yard, where he had a coop of thirty chickens. Thrusting the half-dead bird in with the chickens, he exclaimed, "There, by gosh! you'll say uncle before you get out!" Next morning the uncle went out to see how the parrot was getting on. Looking into the coop, he counted twenty-nine dead chickens, and in the centre of the coop stood the parrot on one foot, holding the thirtieth chicken by the neck and shaking it till its head wobbled, and screaming, "Say uncle, goll darn you, say uncle!"—*New Bedford Standard*.

NOT FOR HIM.—Husband.—"Thank goodness, there is no marrying in heaven."

Wife.—"What difference will that make to you?"—*Detroit Free Press*.

GROUND-SWELLS.

BY

JEANNETTE H. WALWORTH,

AUTHOR OF "THE MARTLET SEAL," "DEAD MEN'S SHOES," "FORGIVEN AT
LAST," "SOUTHERN SILHOUETTES," "A SPLENDID EGOTIST," ETC.

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